

2011

Social graces: the Natchez Garden Club as a literacy sponsor

June Graham

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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SOCIAL GRACES:
THE NATCHEZ GARDEN CLUB AS A LITERACY SPONSOR

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Educational Theory, Policy and Practice

by
June Newman Graham
B. A., Louisiana State University, 2001
M. A., Louisiana State University, 2002
August 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere gratitude is expressed to Professor Petra Munro Hendry for so kindly contributing to this dissertation and her deep commitment to her scholarship and the cause of women's history. Her passion brought me to this study and pushed me to explore this topic and pursue its completion. I am deeply indebted to for intellectually nurturing. Thank you for guiding me towards this research. Special thanks go to my advisory committee composed of Nina Asher, Jackie Bach, Denise Egea-Kuehne Jennifer Milam, Danny Shipka and Sue Weinstein who so kindly read and critiqued my work, adding their own dimension to the way I approach the topic of club women. Much appreciation is extended to The Natchez Garden Club. I thank them for opening their doors to me. This research would not be possible without access to the archives that The Natchez Garden Club gave me access to. I would also like to thank Karin DeGravelles, Kristi Richard Melancon, Hillary Procknow and Jie Yu for the dedicated reading of this text.

None of this would be possible without the support of two very special people in my life. For their grounding and never ending love, I extend my heartfelt thanks to my husband Brent and my mother, Beth, who are my personal inspiration. For their patience in putting up with me through the long days and nights of my field research and dissertation writing I am forever indebted.

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ABSTRACT

This study asks (1) how did the Natchez Garden Club conceptualize and promote literacy in their club and in the community?, (2) how might educational practices of select Southern, White, elite women be theorized in the lives of the Natchez Garden Club and its members during the 1930s, 40s and 50s?, and (3) how does an examination of the Natchez Garden Club illuminate understandings of select Southern, White, privileged women and the ways they took on roles as informal educators? To answer these questions, the study examined The Natchez Garden Club, an elite White women's club in the South and their literacy practices. The case study used document analysis, interviews and observations to gain understanding of literacy practices of the club. A central finding was that the club engaged in literacy activities that included authoring books, printing a literary magazine and performing a pageant and home tours that perpetuated a version of history that romanticized the South and perpetuated the ideas of paternalism, patriarchy, and privilege as depicted in the Lost Cause Movement. The irony of this is that the women inverted patriarchy by establishing their place as benevolent leaders in Natchez despite expectations that they would remain in the private realm. The study compels researchers to think about the ways privilege influences social action and the ways informal institutions can become literacy sponsors for young people and community members.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

The Club teaches us more than how to act. It teaches us to be women, powerful women.

Sarah Hankens

Natchez Garden Club Member,

1940-present

As Sarah Hankens's quote suggests, The Natchez Garden Club is engaged in teaching young women how to gain power and negotiate gender norms within the dominant gender ideologies of the Old South. These ideologies were deeply embedded in the Lost Cause¹ which promoted patriarchy, paternalism and privilege as critical to the social order in the region. This study looked to the hidden curriculum of the Natchez Garden Club of the 1930s, 40s and 50s, which acted as a literacy sponsor and through which women became leaders within the community, thereby subverting gender norms. How their literacy practices yield economic and cultural capital is the focus of this study.

Literacy and Its Social Turn

To understand the literacy practices of The Club, it is important to understand literacy in broader terms. The social turn in literacy studies has researchers looking beyond the individual to the social, cultural and political context in which people live their lives and learn to read. Literacy scholars such as Gee (1996), Street (1995; 1984)

¹ The Lost Cause refers to the Southern movement to preserve the ideas of the Old South prior to the Civil War.

and Heath (1983) see reading and writing in the context of the social and cultural practices of which they are a part. Street (1995), for example, argues that rather than basing definitions of literacy on a narrow point of view of one discipline, New Literacy Studies should borrow from multiple disciplines in order to see how literacy functions in broader social contexts. Street argues that literacy is not merely a neutral tool; rather it creates power structures and, as a consequence, power struggles. This dissertation takes up these issues by examining the Natchez Garden Club of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s as a literacy sponsor. It asks how wealthy, White women in the small town of Natchez read the world and teach others to identify the world through particular literacy practices that construct gender, class and race ideologies.

Gee (1996) explains literacy by his first defining discourse. As he defines it, discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking and of acting that is used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group. Furthermore, discourses are inherently ideological. They involve values and viewpoints that they endorse when they act or speak. These viewpoints make them resistant to internal criticism, since alternative views would mark one as an outsider. Maintaining viewpoints and values is central to any discourse, which thus marginalizes other viewpoints. The Club promotes certain viewpoints at the expense of others. This makes discourses intimately related to the distribution of social power and social hierarchies. There are benefits to control over certain discourses: they can lead to money, power and status within society. Gee (1996) calls these dominant discourses that are led by dominant groups.

Gee (1996) points out that it is important to realize that it is not individuals who speak and act, but rather historically and socially defined discourses speak through

individuals. There are two ways that Gee says one comes by the discourses one controls. The first is the process of acquisition, which is acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models. It occurs in natural settings and without any formal teaching, like the teaching The Club does. This is how most people come to control their first language. The other way one comes to control discourse is through the learning process, which involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching. It involves breaking down the thing being learned into analytic parts and developing a meta-knowledge about the subject. Much of what one acquires in life is a mixture of acquisition and learning. Too often, however, one ignores acquisition, which is how much of the learning occurs in The Club. Therefore, learning to read is always learning some aspect of some discourse or way of thinking, like that promoted by organizations such as The Club. This brings one back to literacy, traditionally defined as the ability to read and interpret texts. But interpretation of a text is merely a viewpoint on what is written and embedded in a discourse.

Most humans acquire at least two discourses. One, they are born into and acquire through acquisition, usually from their family. Beyond this primary discourse, there are other discourses associated with institutions beyond the family. Gee (1996) calls these secondary discourses. They are developed when people have access to different social groups and involve uses of language that go beyond one's primary discourse.

The implications of this definition of literacy are threefold. Scholars need to study the literacy acquisition and the messages conveyed in the process. Language users need to be aware of how dominant discourses carry cultural capital and should be able

to offer a critique of these literacies. And finally, one must look outside of schools to examine where acquisition occurs and how it shapes power relations amongst users.

Studies such as Heath's (1983) *Ways with Words* and Street's (1984) *Literacy and Practice* have focused on literacy practices in specific cultural and community settings. These works remind one that literacy is

webbed in social structures and thus the power relations, tensions, and inequities that characterize social political, and institutional life will play out in literacy use as well. Learning and using written language is, then, not just a matter of learning a linguistic code, and the learning of it does not guarantee access to and participation in mainstream institutions. (Cushman, Kintgen, Kroll and Rose, 2001, p. 12)

This study seeks to understand the social context of The Club and its relationship to literacy practices. The Club uses literacy to carry a social and cultural message about women's role in the South, which is also complicated by race and class. The study speaks to the field of literacy education in that it understands literacy is a means to an end. Literacy is a vehicle for carrying ideology to its audience.²

Initially, this ideology was not apparent to me when I came to Natchez, Mississippi, a sleepy little town in the Deep South. Instead I found it charming and quaint. Rows of town homes with perfectly manicured gardens lined the one-way streets. Antique shops filled the downtown area along with small cafés and a particularly popular fudge shop. As a young teenager, I was there with my mother for

² For example of New Literacy Studies see Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classroom*. New York: Cambridge UP.; Heller, C. E. (1997). *Until We are Stronger Together: Women Writers in the Tenderloin*. New York: Teachers College Press; Fishman, A. (1988). *Amish Literacy: What and How it Means*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

the town's annual tour of homes. Years later, the town would draw me back as I wanted to study social clubs in the South amongst the modern day Southern belles – wealthy White women who uphold the values of the Old South. This made Natchez the perfect place because the town's claim to fame is that it is the place where the Old South lives on. Poised and graceful, the women who guided us through the town's famous homes drew me in and won me over with their sense of Southern hospitality.

When I returned to Natchez as a researcher, I began peeling back the layers of the town's social and political milieu. I found myself engaging in casual conversations, making connections, and what I thought was head way to accessing the privileged world of the Natchez elite, that is, until I offered my home for a private book club meeting for one of the more elite social clubs in Natchez. The response from my would-be guests was most revealing.

The women asked me how many place settings of china I had and what flatware pattern I used. I was stunned when one of them mentioned that all twenty members usually had a formal place setting with silver serving pieces at such parties. I was from a middle class family, an “out-of-towner” suddenly aware of just how out of place I was: I was not wealthy; I was not of their status; and I certainly did not have twenty place settings of china and silver. I quickly realized that gaining access and establishing rapport as a researcher with the upper-class, Southern women I intended to study would be complicated by social structures of class, status and race.

As much as I felt like an outsider among these wealthy women, I also had a deep longing to obtain the status that made them powerful in that small town. I knew that the women of this club had single-handedly saved the town from ruin in the 1930s in the midst of the Great Depression by building a tourist industry, and because of that they

were revered as keepers of Southern culture. How was it that these ostensibly docile Southern belles came to be unspoken officials whose mere words had the power to make things happen? What did it mean for women to be the saviors? How had wealth allowed them the kind of access and privilege that was typically hindered by their gender? What did it mean that these women remained superficially passive and unassuming belles? How were they negotiating and navigating the complex terrain of wealth, privilege, racism and sexism?

This study looks at a group of Southern women in Mississippi and examines their activities as literacy sponsors in an elite social organization, the Natchez Garden Club (here after referred to as The Club), during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. While recording their history, I consider the complexity that gender brings to their work as public and private purveyors of education within their community at a time when women were most often relegated to the home. I discuss the inroads that they made as powerful females while also recognizing the ways they participated in the day's gender ideology that said women were to be seen and not heard.

Statement of the Problem

Little attention is given to the informal modes of schooling as promulgated by the club movement and particularly the club movement during the Progressive era in the South, where there was a renewal of the Lost Cause Movement, a movement to preserve the ideals of the Old South, as a means to reconstruct Southern pride. In Natchez, a site of renewal occurred within the garden club movement, one of these privileged sites of which one knows little.

Researchers have not asked how private institutions such as women's elite social clubs played roles in shaping notions of Southern history, culture, and identity

during this time period. This omission may be partly due to what Howard (2009) calls the fear of “studying up.” He states,

Education scholars, politicians, and mass media are remarkably silent about how practices, institutions and structures give advantages to influential groups. Social inequality is almost invariably explained as a problem (even the fault) of the poor and marginalized...rarely are the lives of wealthy elites considered in explaining how the advantages of the few are related to the predicaments of many.

(Louisiana State University, March 19, 2009)

This is much more than a gap in the research; it is “a critical conceptual link missing in our understanding of inequality” (Howard, Louisiana State University, March 19, 2009). Nader (1974) argues, “the consequence of not studying up as well as down are serious in terms of developing adequate theory and description” (p. 290). While many rightly pay attention to the marginalized and underprivileged, we must also understand the other side, the elite, to gain a full view of the socioeconomic factors that influence education, formally and informally.

Research Questions

My study attempts to fill in the gap by considering how the privileged society of the Natchez Garden Club of the 1930s, 40s and 50s became literacy sponsors to its own members, as well as to youth, community members and tourists. To explore this overarching issue I asked the following questions:

1. How did the Natchez Garden Club conceptualize and promote literacy in their club and in the community?

2. How might educational practices of select Southern, White, elite women be theorized in the lives of the Natchez Garden Club and its members during the 1930s, 40s and 50s?
3. How does an examination of the Natchez Garden Club illuminate understandings of select Southern, White, privileged women and the ways they took on roles as informal educators?

Conceptual Framework

In this dissertation I examine the Natchez Garden Club as a community of practice that takes into consideration both gender and place. Cultural anthropologists Lave and Wenger (1991) were the first to use the term *community of practice* and noted that in specialized social groups, there are often rich learning contexts that create socially situated identities. The term *community of practice* refers to a place where social learning occurs and is shared through the socio-cultural practices that evolve when a group has a common purpose and acts towards achieving that goal.

As I discuss the Natchez Garden Club as a community of practice, I will concentrate on literacy practices that help to shape the club women, just as gender and regionalism do. In recent years, the definitions of literacy have expanded beyond the traditional meaning that says literacy is the ability to read and write. Much of this change must be credited to New Literacy Studies (NLS) and scholars such as James Paul Gee (1991), Brian Street (1995) and Deborah Brandt (2001a). NLS contends that literacy implies multiple practices whose meanings and uses are both informed and shaped by their location on the social landscape of human culture (Gee, 1991; Street, 1995). NLS argues that literacy is a social act. Most often educational literacy studies

look closely at school-based literacy practices. Not as frequently do they recount the local conditions and lived moments of literacy learning that engages one on a daily basis and in common ways. NLS has changed this, calling on a wider range of studies of greater social and cultural consideration.

In order to examine literacy practices in the Natchez Garden Club, I draw on Deborah Brandt's (2001a) concept of "literacy sponsorship." She writes, "Sponsors, as I have come to think of them, are any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold, literacy--and gain advantage by it in some way" (p. 19). She explains that literacy sponsorship has taught us that throughout the ages, learning has always "required permission, sanction, assistance, [and] coercion..." (Brandt, 2001b, p. 556). While typically we think of teachers as sponsors, Brandt suggests there are other sponsors that we may not think of initially, such as older relatives, religious leaders, and club affiliations.

Brandt (2001b) states that one tends to think of sponsors as older, richer, and more knowledgeable. "They lend their resources or credibility to the sponsored but also stand to gain benefits from their success, whether by direct repayment or, indirectly, by credit of association" (p. 557). This is certainly the case for many clubs who, in endorsing young people, have expectations that those youth will return as members of the club to promote the club's agenda and legacy. Often these clubs, such as the Natchez Garden Club, sought to influence texts of various kinds as well as to engage in publishing memorabilia that determines what version of history will be told.

There is a danger in this, as Brandt (2001b) indicates, "In whatever form, sponsors deliver the ideological freight that must be borne for access to what they have.

Of course, the sponsored can be oblivious to or innovative with this ideological burden” (p. 557). She offers the example of little league players with logos on their back. While they may not notice the logos they wear, they are in fact endorsing a product, company, or ideology. Considering this, I became more and more aware of what was being endorsed and how it received support as I delved deeper into this research. This understanding of literacy is important for this study because it shows the potential that the Natchez Garden Club has either to promote or to negate various practices in the community of Natchez, Mississippi.

In this chapter I have offered a brief note on the social turn in literacy studies and what that means for the current research, along with my research questions and conceptual framework. Next, I discuss my personal narrative of how I came to my literature. I discuss the women’s club movement in the United States. Then I discuss the Lost Cause and its various tenants. I outline the potential contributions of this work. I lay out the research design including data collection and data analysis. Finally, I conclude with a statement on positionality and trustworthiness before noting the study’s limitations.

The Women’s Club Movement in the United States

Traditionally, researchers look at formal institutions such as schools and universities as the places where education occurs. Often unnoticed are the many extracurricular sites of learning such as clubs, particularly women’s clubs. Women have long organized themselves into groups for the purposes of solidarity, companionship and education. One of the earliest women’s groups, The New England Women’s Club of Boston, held its first meeting in 1868. Its purpose was to offer “opportunities for

culture and service” (Hall, 1932, p. 100). It boasted members such as Julia Ward Howe, Mrs. Horace Mann and Elizabeth Peabody. It provided classes in history, art, literature and foreign languages.

New York journalist, Jane Cunningham Croly, pen-named Jeanie June, organized a women’s club called Sorosis in 1868 after she was denied access to a men’s literary association (Blair, 1980, p. 24). The club started as a social and literary society dedicated to self improvement and advancement. It focused initially on literature, art, music and drama. Modeling itself on salons in Europe it aimed to enhance women’s sensibilities as well as their intellect. “Not discussed in the club was politics and theology lest it prove to be divisive” (p. 23). It denied men on account that “men would overpower them if they tried to work together” (p. 21). The club was viewed suspiciously because it did not justify itself by female devotion and self-sacrifice, a burden that men’s clubs did not carry (Seaholm, 1988, p. 77).

Suffrage groups were among the first women’s groups that organized themselves on the national scene; the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Suffrage Association were founded in 1869. Most of these organizations were social feminist groups which sought to draw attention to women’s virtues and protect females against the ills of society.

In 1866, the Young Women’s Christian Association was started, and by 1871 the YMCA had chapters in 13 cities. The Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) organized in 1873 with the purpose of preventing the sale and consumption of alcohol. Under Frances Willard the program expanded to social reform that included campaigning for religious education, prison reform and worker’s rights. By 1890 the WCTU boasted 160,000 members (Rothman, 1978).

Women's church groups, benevolent societies and missionary associations were all a part of this club movement. These groups were particularly good at raising funds, an attribute that served them well. For example, in 1890, the Methodist Women's Board of Foreign Mission had a membership of 70,000 women and owned almost two hundred thousand dollars worth of property (Scott, 1970).

By the 1890s, women's clubs were forming in all regions of the United States. Initially they were patterned after the Sorosis Club, focusing on self improvement. They frequently started small with as few as ten or fifteen women meeting in club members' homes weekly or bi-monthly when their children were in school (Blair, 1980, p. 62). The movement went West and then South, and in 1890 the National Federation of Women's Clubs was founded as an umbrella organization that grouped all women's clubs in the United States. One often hears of Northern clubs, but much less frequently does one ever hear of Southern clubs.

Annette Baxter writes that clubs "made possible a variety of escapes from unadulterated domesticity, among them the escape into larger cultural and intellectual arenas" (in Blair, 1980, p. xii). They became vehicles for women's entry to mainstream public affairs from which they had previously been virtually banished. But women did more than enter the public realm. They frequently redirected it through subverting domesticity and making club work a social activity.

Still Baxter states, "In their appeals to the opposite sex, women found that it required greater skill to rationalize club activity on the grounds of self-improvement than it took to explain their participation in social welfare and humanitarian reform" (in Blair, 1980, p. xii). So many clubs shifted their public actions from education for self to education for service. They employed the lady's traits "to justify their departure from the

home to exert special influence on the male sphere” (Blair, 1980, p. 4). This became known as municipal housekeeping, and through it women became the custodians of the culture.

Women’s clubs were “not rejecting the traditional imagery of the lady, but consciously building upon it” (Blair, 1980, p. 5). They did this because “female self-improvement was evidently more threatening than social activism” (Baxter in Blair, 1980, p. xiii). But as long as women could defend their actions as volunteerism and public servants, they could “indulge the habit of sisterhood” (Baxter in Blair, 1980, p. xiv).

Still, Theodora Penny Martin (1987) notes,

in these clubs, which filled the gaps between society’s formal institutions and the informal needs of individual women, members developed—along with the stirrings of intellectual independence—an awareness of and confidence in themselves and in their sex which they had not been able to accomplish alone.
(p. 3)

They, therefore, used their roles as public caretakers to establish themselves as leaders in their community. They used their new roles to accomplish agendas that fought for women’s rights. Clubs blended “the political world of the militant suffragist and the domestic world of the homemaker.... [and] many of them found ways to evade society’s restriction” (Blair, 1980, pp. 3-4). These clubs provided significant alternative routes towards women’s self-development. Blair (1980) explains this, saying:

The brand of feminism to which clubwomen subscribed was not a startling and innovative ideology manufactured by a corps of clever visionaries. It was a

natural outgrowth of the efforts of countless women of the early nineteenth century to embody the spreading ideal of ladydom. (p. 117)

Moreover, “Clubs provided an exchange among women and an opportunity to refine the education they had begun as schoolgirls, but had abandoned for marriage and family” (Blair, 1980, p. 118).

While women used the clubs to advance their causes, the club platform won them new respect. Blair (1980) explains, “club life taught women the speaking and organizing skills which they later applied to civic reform” (p. 118).³

The Lost Cause Movement

The Lost Cause Movement emerged in the late 1800s as many Whites felt honor should be paid to the antebellum values that were manifested by the Confederate soldiers who fought and often died during the Civil War. There are three main tenets of Lost Cause: Southern aristocracy, states’ rights and slavery.

Southern Aristocracy

The over arching theme that embodies the natural social order through Lost Cause is Southern aristocracy. Southern aristocracy reflects the ruling class, which is legitimated through patriarchy, paternalism and privilege.

³ Black women also organized themselves. Ida B. Wells created the first African-American women’s club in 1893. During this time the focus was mostly on working class women but soon the groups organized themselves into national organizations such as the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs. From there they took on fighting for more political freedom and equality. More work needs to be done in this area, especially in Natchez where the story has gone understudied.

Patriarchy. One of the main principles of the Lost Cause was its ongoing relationship with patriarchy, which is the social system that makes males the primary authority figures in society where fathers and husbands hold authority over women and children. It implies male privilege and is dependent on female subordination. Patriarchy exhibited itself in the economic, legal, social and political organizations. Although patriarchy has been extensively critiqued in recent decades its influence remains powerful, particularly in the South where it helps maintain the social structure of the Old South.

While in the 19th century, women began to question patriarchy and the authority it assumed from the Christian Bible, the Antebellum American South was ruled by the principles of patriarchy. Particularly after the Civil War patriarchy enjoyed a resurgence in the practice in an effort to restore social order headed by White males.

The Civil War had threatened masculinity, challenging men's honor and bravery. Gaines Foster (1987) writes, "Defeat on the battlefield must have led soldiers raised in a culture that celebrated personal bravery and martial skills to question whether they had lived up to expectations, to question whether they had behaved honorably" (p. 25). He continues:

The value system of the Old South demanded that males demonstrate personal bravery and protect their women. It promised women not only that protection but the respect of all men in return for purity, piety, and submissiveness. The war and its aftermath lead some men to question whether they had met these standards and some women to doubt their efficacy. (p. 26)

Pinar (2001) argues that many Southern males doubted their position at the head of the social order and were thus emasculated by the war (Pinar, 2001).

Pinar (2001) discusses the fears that many White men felt during and following the Civil War. Before the war, White men had enforced slavery, managing the subjugation and exploitation of Blacks on plantations across the South. But as the war pulled more and more White men away from their homes to fight, it required White women to assume power of maintaining order in private and public spaces. They were forced to supervise slave labor as well as control and manage an increasingly restless slave population. These women constituted the second front in the South's war for independence (Faust, 1996; Pinar 2001).

The prospect of few White men at home provoked fears of slave revolts and concerns about the vulnerability of White women. Faust (1996) points out, "these issues went beyond questions of gender; they represent deep-seated worries about sex" (p. 54-55). Such worries left White men in fear that White women would be sexually violated despite the fact that there were no such cases reported. Nonetheless, White men felt threatened by the prospect that Black men would have legal equality.

Foster (1987) notes that there was no significant women's movement in the South during Reconstruction that paralleled the North. They failed to organize to fight for women's rights and married more frequently than before the war. "Women felt concern and compassion for their loved ones and wanted to comfort, not confront them in their anguish" (p.31). Therefore, no attack on patriarchy developed and male anxieties began to ease.

Paternalism. Perhaps one reason that patriarchy was not challenged in the South is because of the practice of paternalism which is the belief that the family is the

model for the state. Monarchists have mirrored the patriarchal family with subjects obeying kings as the child would a father.

Aristotle argued that the plan of authority and subordination exist throughout the whole of nature. From man to animal, man and wife, slave and children, men rule over the rest of society. Aristotle claimed that “the government of a household is a monarch since every house is governed by a single ruler” (p. 29). He believed that husbands exercise a republican government over their wives and children and that they should exhibit political authority over slaves.

Today much of society takes the male hierarchical structure as natural and even neutral. De Bonald (1993) writes that the family is a miniature state. He states that the father is the power, “active and strong,” the mother is the minister, the “median term between the two extremes of this continuous proportion” and the child is a subject, “passive or weak” (p. 44-46). De Bonald defends his analysis by quoting and interpreting passages from the Bible:

(It) calls man the reason, the head, the power of woman says St. Paul. It calls women the helper of man: “Let us make man,” says Genesis, “a helper similar to him.” It calls the child a subject, since it tells it, in a thousand places, to obey its parents. (p. 88-89)

These biblical principles have supported paternalism, thus contributing to the existing social order that has White males at the head of Southern society, which furthers the beliefs of the Lost Cause

Privilege. Aside from paternalism and patriarchy, privilege plays an important role in the Old South. It is through privilege that many elites defend their position at the head of society. Bourdieu (1984), with his book *Distinctions*, has become the leading

theorist on privilege. He argues that each individual occupies a multidimensional social space. One is not only defined by social class membership, but by the various associations that one makes through social relations.

These social relations develop, become more complex and become more autonomous. At the same time individuals develop *habitus* that is typical of one's position in social space. By doing so, they acknowledge and reproduce the practices that perpetuate power relations. This research emphasizes how social classes, especially the elite classes, preserve their privilege across generations and through formal and informal modes of teaching.

Bourdieu (1984) claims that how one chooses to create one's social spaces distinguishes oneself from other classes and further distances oneself from lower groups. He claims this distinction happens at a very young age and is internalized leading one toward social dispositions. These class fractions are the preferred distinctions that teach aesthetic preferences to the young and mark them as elite.

In the Old South it was important for everyone to know his or her place in the social order. Classism and elitism became another marker as did patriarchy and paternalism. It is that same social order that many in The Club try to recreate.

States' Rights

During the Civil War the South maintained their reason for going to war was to defend their states' rights to succeed from the Union. Issues over slavery polarized the North and the South. Supporters of states' rights felt there should be a protection of slave property wherever it went. Opponents of slavery argued that such a law like that of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 violated their rights. The question became which and whose rights were being violated.

Jefferson Davis (1890) defended states' rights, stating:

Resolved, that the union of these States rests on the equality of rights and privileges among its members, and that it is especially the duty of the Senate, which represents the States in their sovereign capacity, to resist all attempts to discriminate either in relation to person or property, so as, in the Territories—which are the common possession of the United States—to give advantages to the citizens of one State which are not equally secured to those of every other State. (p. 273)

Since the war and with the movement of the Lost Cause, states' rights has become a code word for segregation. During Reconstruction and even during the Civil Rights Movement the term was used as a defense of segregation. This is a key tenet for the Lost Cause Movement, the hanging on to a hope for the return of segregation, a social order based not only on class privilege and gender but also on race. The Club maintains a segregated system that does not allow Blacks in The Club, distinguishing the White club members as racially superior. States' rights was more than just racial segregation; it was a way of maintaining social control.

Slavery

Another theme in the Lost Cause Movement is slavery. Southern proponents of slavery defended the institution as a necessary evil. Southern Whites feared that the emancipation of Blacks would leave the society and economy in social upheaval. In Alex de Tocqueville's (1994/1835) book, *Democracy in America*, he expressed many Southerners' views of slavery at the time of his writing. He opposed slavery but felt that a multiracial society without slavery was unattainable. Instead he argued for separate societies for each race.

Others offered no apologies for slavery in the South. The defense was the claim that slavery was beneficial for all. John C. Calhoun offered a famous speech in the Senate in 1837 where he declared that slavery was “instead of an evil, a good—a positive good” (as quoted in Beard and Beard, 1921, p. 316). He supported the view that in every civilization one group will rule over other labor groups. He argued that a slave who has lived his life faithfully to his master will be treated kindly and is better off under the system in his old age than out on the streets by himself. For followers of the Lost Cause, this became another defense of Southern aristocracy, the idea that White masters were benevolent leaders to their slaves. Recreating this defense excused slavery in the minds of many White Southerners.

Social Darwinism and the Social Gospel

Part of what fed into the South’s desire to maintain a social hierarchy is the late nineteenth century ideologies of social Darwinism and the Social Gospel. Social Darwinism is derived from Charles Darwin’s theory of the survival of the fittest. It particularly refers to the struggle for existence being used to justify social rankings that distinguish the “able” from the “unable.” Using Darwin’s ideas, many in the Progressive era believed some social groups were better adapted to handle conflict and therefore better suited to take leadership positions in society. They used eugenics to defend social laws that follow the “natural order.”

Much like social Darwinism is the Social Gospel movement. This is a Protestant intellectual movement that was also popular in the late 19th century and early 20th century. The movement applied social ethics to social problems, especially inequity. It believed that education for the poor could help develop skills needed for life.

The Lost Cause Movement used both social Darwinism and the Social Gospel to defend the social order it set forth through patriarchy and paternalism that place White males at the head of society and Blacks at the bottom. The belief was that this hierarchy was natural, good and God-ordained.

Following the Civil War, Social Upheaval

Following the Civil War, women's roles had changed, however. Males' patriarchal and paternalistic positions had been challenged by losing the war to the North. Women learned that neither their position in the home nor their status as ladies had protected them in the face of war. Foster (1987) writes, "The war and emancipation...had altered the household status of men, women, had forced women to recognize their physical vulnerability and had exposed the frailty of the protection offered by their moral femininity" (p. 33). But as the war ended and men returned, women began to resume their roles and worked to reestablish the social order that existed prior to the Civil War. Foster states, "[Women's] public sign of support for the men and their failure to attack the patriarchy reassured the former Confederates and began the process of easing their anxieties about their manhood" (p. 33).

Southern commemorative efforts centered on honoring the dead through establishing proper burial grounds, as well as developing mourning practices. The cemetery was the focus of most memorial sites with special days designated to decorate the graves with flowers and Confederate flags. In the Deep South, April 4th was set aside as the day when widows and children would come to the cemeteries, picnic baskets in hand, and celebrate the fallen.

In addition to showing reverence to the dead, the Lost Cause increasingly looked to the customs of the antebellum period to honor the Old South. In their book,

Monuments to the Lost Cause, Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson (2003) write that the Lost Cause presented the Old South as a place “in which genteel white men protected their beautiful and virtuous women and children, fighting with dignity and pride” (p. xvii). They note that although promoters of the Cause did not try to reinstate slavery, they frequently argued it was “a benevolent institution in which southern whites gave guidance and nurture to a simple, dusky people who need Christian help and were loyal to their masters” (p. xvii).

Most of all, according to this retelling of history, the South lost the war not due to lack of bravery or military mistake, but because of the mere overwhelming numbers of Northern opposition. The Lost Cause seeks to restore the respect of the South by creating a South that never was. Whitlock (2007) argues, “The Lost Cause is a romanticized idea of the South, the persisting legend of a lost civilization, one that never was and is always in the future” (p. 56)

For women in the South, the ideology of domestic feminism which situated females as moral guardians allowed them to extend their political powers. Davis (2004) explains,

The exigencies of [Civil] war forced a marriage between the public and private venues that compelled societies’ primary spiritual guardians to defend the moral order of home and community against the threat of social dislocations. Guarding the morals of the past was not only consistent with traditional gender expectations; female activities in the community’s ceremonies and rituals constituted a natural extension of the woman’s accustomed roles as the culture’s conservators of western traditions and morals. (pp. 33-34)

For White upper to middle class women in the Deep South, this notion of domestic feminism took on a particular focus in regards to the guarding of Southern values. Moreover Mills and Simpson (2003) write, “When the emphasis moved from mourning the dead to promoting the positive values of the Civil War effort at the end of the century, they preserved via changing organizational structures” (p. xvi). Southern women organized themselves into societies that were meant to honor and reconstruct Southern ideologies. The first of these groups was the Confederate Memorial Association (CMA) (Kubassek, 1992). Originally the association was not just a women’s group, but it soon became clear that it was the female membership that was raising the money for monuments to honor the Confederate war efforts, collecting funds by sponsoring concerts, picnics and raffles.

In 1894, women from the CMA began organizing chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), which was dedicated to their Confederate history “for its pure record of virtue, valor, and sacrifice” (Poppenheim, 1957). These women were especially immersed in the Lost Cause Movement, which began in earnest in the 1880s just after the end of the Civil War (Kubassek, 1992). The movement was born out of a Southern desire to continue the struggle against “northern aggression.” Those involved praised the sovereignty of states’ rights, which they claimed were threatened and violated by Union forces. The UDC sought to prove that while the North had succeeded militarily, they had not managed to dampen the ideal of independence of the South. Through their efforts, the White Southern ideologies survived Reconstruction.

The UDC’s early objective was to memorialize and care for Confederate veterans. However, as those veterans began to de cease, the UDC looked for a new way to maintain their future membership as well as to memorialize the Confederate

cause. They asked themselves what better way to remember and continue the Southern traditions than to educate youth as a living memorial to the Confederate ideals. In 1917 the UDC formed the Children of the Confederacy (Cox, 2003, p. 157). A member of the UDC, Virginia Clay Clopton advocated, "We must teach our children to uphold the lofty standards of Southern womanhood and prove themselves worthy to shape the moral and social destiny of the fairest region" (as cited in Cox, 2003, pp. 122-123). To do this the UDC began a campaign to teach "the correct, fair, and unbiased" history in Southern schools (Raines, 1898). Responding to the racial ideology of the day, this meant a White view of history. The women exercised influence in Southern education by censoring textbooks used in the schools and by sponsoring writing contests about the Confederacy and its leaders.

Closely aligned with the UDC were the Daughters of the American Revolution (Gibbs, 1969). Developed earlier than the UDC, the DAR was started in 1890 and the two organizations had many common members. But, while the UDC was fading under public pressure to end racial segregation in the early 1950s, the DAR was expanding. They absorbed many of the ideals of the UDC while continuing to promote Southern education through advisory positions on textbook committees and sponsoring writing contests about good citizenship.

The Confederate Memorial Association, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Children of the Confederacy, and the Daughters of the American Revolution were clearly associated with public and political action. There were, however, other clubs in existence framed with less political causes in mind. Instead, they again built off the ideals of domesticity. One of these types of clubs was the Natchez Garden Club, which, after the opportunity was presented, became involved in

political and economic issues under the guise of domestic feminism. In 1931, club president Katherine Miller started the biannual Pilgrimage, which still operates as a show of homes that earns the local economy over 2 million dollars in revenue in today's funds. In so doing, Miller and the other club women managed political control of the community under the disguise of keeping house.

Gender ideology had a great influence in the ways women were schooled. They were often taught to fall into the expected gender roles that kept them in the domestic sphere. Women worked within the realm and found agency in club work. As the South faced the Civil War and its aftermath, club women like those in the UDC supported the South with pride. Their determination with the Lost Cause Movement memorialized their place as “the Southern women” that are still revered by many Southerners today. Other club women took a much more obvious route to accomplish their political work. Social clubs, such as garden clubs, wrote their own history of the South through the gardens and statues that memorialized the region. The South and its land became a living memorial to the Lost Cause that sought to reestablish women's places on pedestals in Southern society.

Potential Contributions

This study is important because it makes contributions to several areas. Education historians will find it relevant because it looks at an understudied population of educators, most of whom were not formally trained as teachers. The study examines the ways in which they went about training and teaching history to their community despite the absence of any formal platform. Although education research has been slow to acknowledge the relevance of alternative educational practices as a legitimate source of study, this examination takes seriously this club as a site of education. This

study further promises to “deliver voices that have been previously shut out” of scholarship on school experiences (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000, p. 35).

Likewise, literacy scholars will find this research important for its focus on the significance of literacy sponsorship as a means of taking literacy beyond school walls to be used to become literate in the social graces and cultural capital. The ways in which The Club carries forth literacy through its sponsorship of public school textbooks and other sources is noteworthy for scholars interested in the practices of public discourse. Reflecting the focus of NLS, this study of literacy is oriented toward social practices.

Southern scholars can look to this work as a concrete example of how one town held on to the Lost Cause mentality up to the present date. They can use this study to trace the lineage of the Civil War era through Reconstruction by examining the transitions of the United Daughters of the Confederacy to the Garden Club movement in the region as a way to memorialize the Old South.

Finally, studies of privilege can take this work as a perfect example of gender intersecting privilege, with its many contradictions. While privilege seems to triumph gender, the nature of this connection is much more nuanced when influenced by regionalism.

Research Design

To address these areas of potential contributions, I explored literacy sponsorship by asking how the Natchez Garden Club of the 1930s, 40s and 50s became a literacy sponsor for its members, youth, community and tourists. A historical case study was employed to bring a greater understanding of the complex issues of Southern womanhood and educational practices.

First, I chose an information rich case, the Natchez Garden Club, which resides in Natchez, Mississippi. The prestigious social club was a unique sample that offered particular insight into the phenomena being explored in this study. The women of The Club were open to the idea of participating in the research and provided me with access to archives and other data that were helpful for conducting such an intensive historical case study.

This study uses a feminist poststructuralist framework of discursive analysis. Several feminist poststructuralists' understandings of power and resistance have shown that women are not only positioned or shaped by dominant discourse, but are also capably situated to accept, resist and transform discourse. In effect, as Foucault (1972, 1977) has shown, power is not simply a top-down movement, but multiple and complex.

In *Working the Ruins: Feminist Poststructural Theory and Methods in Education*, Elizabeth St. Pierre and Wanda S. Pillow (2000) explain that the goal of feminist poststructural work is "to critique, interrupt, and reinscribe normative, hegemonic, and exclusionary ideologies and practices" (p. 3). Furthermore, they suggest that research such as this start "dismantling truths" because meta narratives are impossible and unwanted (p. 53). My study emphasizes a detailed contextual analysis of the relationship between the women of The Club and those whom The Club chose to educate. The study does not seek to create a new, modified meta narrative but provides a continual displacement with no new truths. St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) add:

[a] gesture toward this kind of transgressive work...is not only different from what has come before but also different from itself. Without the "lure of a transcendental guarantee, the promise of philosophy to 'correct existence'" (Butler, 1995, p. 131), or the consolation of the universal, these post structural

feminist educators work on, strategically assembling and then reassembling feminism, education, and science. (p. 11)

Data Collection

Because this study involved human subjects, I first received approval from the Institutional Review Board to conduct this study. Data was collected over the course of a year (see Figure 1.1). I used interviews, document analysis and observations to gather data.

March 2010-May 2010	Surveys Initial Interviews Observations of Spring Pilgrimage
June 2010- August 2010	Document Analysis of Textbook
September 2010-November 2010	Second Interviews
December 2010-February 2011	Document Analysis of Periodical Final Interviews

Figure 1.1 Timeline of Data Collection

Interviews

I conducted a survey at the monthly meeting of The Club to identify members who were involved in The Club's historic pageant in the 1930s, 40s, and/or 50s as children or members (see Appendix A). From that general survey, I identified and interviewed seven members of The Club and one non-member (a man who was king) who were children, queen, king or members involved in the pageant in the 1930s, 40s and/or 50s. They were Sarah Hankens, Thelma Tullos, Elisabeth Knight, Terry Smith,

Stephanie Wall, Holly Hunt, Jennifer Wall and James Bennett. I used semi-structured interviews to collect the data (see Appendix B). The interviews were done in the homes of the participants at their convenience. Interviews were taped, transcribed and sent to participants so that they could member-check the transcripts. I chose interviews as part of my case study method because as Patton (1990) explains,

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe....We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. (p. 196)

As Patton suggests, I am interested in the perspectives of the women in The Club as well as past events. Their feelings about events were a strong factor for me as I attempted to understand the motivations behind their actions.

Document Analysis

The first document analyzed was a textbook by Pearl Guyton (1952) entitled *Our Mississippi*.⁴ I examined the book to see how it might be read by students in the Natchez region. I first looked at the Mississippi Department of Education's Textbook Adoption Records, housed in Jackson, Mississippi, to see what role The Club played in the adoption of the textbook (for a complete list of archives used see figure 1.2). I then

⁴ *Our Mississippi* was originally entitled *A History of Mississippi from Indian Time to the Present* published in 1934.

looked at the original publication of the book housed in Jackson, Mississippi, at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, as well as the 1952 publication of the text also housed there. After reading the 1952 publication closely, I developed themes. Next I reread the text and coded for these themes.

Textbook Adoption Records, 1940s-1950s at the Department of Education in Jackson, Mississippi
<i>A History of Mississippi from Indian Times to the Present</i> (1934) Pearl Guyton Collection at the Department of Archives and History in Jackson, Mississippi, Local Call Number 976.2/G99h
<i>Our Mississippi</i> (1952) Pearl Guyton Collection at the Department of Archives and History in Jackson, Mississippi, Local Call Number 976.2/G99o/1952
The Natchez Garden Club, Vertical File at the Judge George W. Armstrong Library in Natchez, Mississippi
The Natchez Garden Club Archive at Magnolia Hall in Natchez Mississippi

Figure 1.2 Archives Used in the Study

In addition to the analysis of the textbook, I completed an analysis of two other books written by club members, titled *Natchez of Long Ago and the Pilgrimage* (1938) by Katherine Miller and *Natchez* (1940) by Nola Nance Oliver. I also analyzed The Club's periodical, *Over the Garden Wall*, housed at Judge George W. Armstrong Library in vertical files on The Club. I did an overall reading of all 76 issues of the periodical in order to develop themes. Following that initial reading I did-as Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005) suggest-a detailed reading of 18 issues, selecting two per year randomly. I

coded based on the themes that emerged during the original reading. I read 18 issues because it allowed me to have two issues per year with the exception of the last two years that the periodical was published as the archives had only one issue from those two years.

Observations

Finally, I observed a production of The Club's annual historic pageant in the Spring of 2010 so that I could understand the pageant as a performative literacy. I looked at a script of the pageant from 1942 so that I had a historic understanding of what the pageant was like in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. The script was housed at Magnolia Hall in Natchez, Mississippi in The Club's archive.

Data Analysis

Directed by the literature in curriculum studies, feminist theory and Southern studies, data analysis sought to interpret the ways in which the women of The Club have negotiated between making educational and social progress while still operating within the unspoken boundaries of what it means to be a Southern woman.

Additionally, my analysis concentrated on the complexities that gender reflects in The Club's educational philanthropy. Critical historical, feminist, and Southern epistemologies helped inform my analysis of The Club.

Very little has been written on how to analyze case studies until recent decades (Dey, 1993; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Since then several methods for data analysis have been introduced, such as ethnographic analysis, narrative analysis, phenomenological analysis, constant comparative analysis, content analysis and analytic induction. I focused my data analysis using discursive analysis.

Data analysis began during the data collection phase as I noticed reoccurring themes and practices. This initial phase of data analysis was helpful because it allowed time for member-checks and clarifications where needed. As Merriam (1998) notes, “the study design of a qualitative study is emergent and flexible, responsive to changing conditions of the study in progress” (p. 8).

First person accounts of experiences were critical whether they came in the form of life histories, interviews, journals or letter writing or any other ways “we compose our lives” (Clandin and Connelly, 1994, p. 420). Interpretive research strategies provided a thick description of the ways The Club is continuously (re)defining education for themselves and others. Though I have been in contact with the Natchez Garden Club for four years leading up to this study, the data collection and analysis of this study lasted one year—two months to conduct initial interviews and locate documents, eight months of intensive observation and interviews as well as document analysis, and finally two months to conduct summative, individual interviews and conclude data analysis.

At the conclusion of the research period, data was analyzed across the fronts for emergent themes and used to develop a sound and meaningful account of these women’s experiences with respect to the educational experience that the women both undergo and sponsor.

Pearls, Pant Suit, and Positionality: Encounters with The Club

After finally getting permission to hand out my surveys at The Club’s regular monthly meeting, I was thrilled; I thought I was in. I prepared myself for the event. I bought a nice black pant suit and black flats. I put on my pearls, of course, and I drove my way up the mansion’s long driveway. As soon as I parked, I realized this was not

the occasion for a pant suit. The Club women were dressed in lovely day dresses with coordinating hats, some even had gloves. Sheepishly I approached the president, who was elegant in her ivory lacy attire. She welcomed me and offered me the first ten minutes of the meeting. Soon I was standing in front of the women with all their regalia in my drab suit, inwardly knowing I would never be “in.”

Fine, Weis, Weseen, and Wong (2000) argue that it is the responsibility of qualitative researchers to

interrogate in our writings who we are as we coproduce the narratives we presume to “collect” . . . and interrogate what we do, what we choose not to report, how we frame our data, on whom we shed our scholarly gaze, who is protected and not protected as we do our work (p. 123).

Furthermore, Behard (1996) reminds one that there is an emotional involvement with the material one collects and reports on but “what happens within the observer must be made known...if the nature of what has been observed is to be understood” (p. 6).

To clearly identify my own positionality within the context of this study, I must reveal that my family has a second home on the outskirts of Natchez. As a child I spent weekends and holidays there; therefore, Natchez is very much like a second home to me. In fact, I was even married on one of the plantations in Natchez (though it was not affiliated with the Natchez Garden Club). This allowed me more access to Natchez, as many of the women identified with me when I told them how I first became interested in Natchez as a child. Furthermore, knowing where I was married, many of the club women likely assumed a degree of wealth within my family. In many ways this served me well as it allowed me an insider status with the women of the Natchez Garden Club.

On the other hand, being so like the women made me uncomfortable as I began my analysis of them, because in a sense, I was critiquing women who were very much like me in gender, race and socioeconomic standing, though I would be considered “new money” in their world of “old money.” I grappled with my own positionality throughout the study, questioning everything from my own desire to conduct this study in this location to the time when I should or should I not nod my head in interviews so as not to portray agreement with what the interviewee was saying. Though I outwardly appeared to be like one of these women, inwardly I mostly found my social and political feelings to be divergent from theirs. This left me aware of my status as what I call an insider/outsider.

I grappled with this as I tried to disassociate myself from my study, though I inwardly know that I will be dealing with these issues throughout my years as a researcher and educator. But more importantly, I tried to recognize that, as Behar (1996) writes, “the worst of it is that not only is the observer vulnerable, but so too, yet more profoundly, are those whom we observe” (p. 24). As I conducted this research, I was diligent in not painting the women as either “bad” or “good” out of my own desire to find simple answers. Instead I remained aware that each club member, like every person, has complex and often contradictory characteristics, which is what makes research and education a human endeavor.

Trustworthiness

In addition to being open about my own conflicts as a researcher, I also established credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability through triangulation of data from interviews and artifacts, researcher reflections, as well as member-checks. Prior to beginning interviews, a survey was conducted to gather an

overall preview of the ways the club members perceive educational and historical activities in The Club. Then initial individual interviews served to introduce me to the club members who became participants and helped me gain knowledge of the members' backgrounds and experiences in The Club to date. These initial interviews also helped me to establish a relationship of trust and openness with club members. Each interview in this study was audio-taped and transcribed, allowing for a regular member-check and review by myself. Detailed notes and my reflections as the researcher were also kept in a researcher's journal allowing for critical moments to be captured and recorded.

Limitations

As a qualitative research study, this research is subjective, specific to the context, and its goal is not to generalize. Rather, qualitative research is "inquiry that help[s] us to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible" (Merriam, 1998, p. 5). This research is specific to the context of The Club and the experiences and narratives of the members. Furthermore, St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) write, "Subjects may well be the tellers of experience; but every telling is constrained, partial and determined by the discourses and histories that prefigure, even as they promise representation" (p. 32). Consequently, the goal of this study is to offer some insight about how The Club functioned as a literacy sponsor and how its members negotiated gender during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s in order to shape education through their work in The Club.

Conclusion

With all this stated, the study will be presented in six chapters, the first being this introduction. Chapter Two situates the study by giving a historical overview of Natchez and specifically the Natchez Garden Club. Chapter Three examines the relationship between The Club and its work as a literacy sponsor to youth in the community through its support of a textbook used in the Natchez schools, as well as the two other books written by club women. Chapter Four outlines how The Club used literacy to educate its own members in the form of a monthly periodical called *Over the Garden Wall*. Chapter Five considers the extracurricular practices that the Natchez Garden Club sponsors through performative literacy in historic pageants. Finally the Epilogue offers a conclusion of how The Club uses literacy to (re)construct a history of the Old South, thereby creating the ideology of the Lost Cause.

CHAPTER 2:

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI

Natchez, Mississippi is suspended 200 feet above the Mississippi River on the highest outcrop of land north of the Gulf of Mexico. As the “oldest civilized settlement on the river,” it is older than New Orleans, Louisiana by two years (Natchez Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2006). Originally inhabited by the Natchez Indians, the area was established as a French settlement in 1716. It was then used as a British outpost in 1763 before trading hands to the Spanish in 1779. Finally, in 1798, the Americans colonized the area making it the first capital of the Mississippi Territory. In 1817, the city assumed its place as the first capital of the new state of Mississippi (James, 1993).

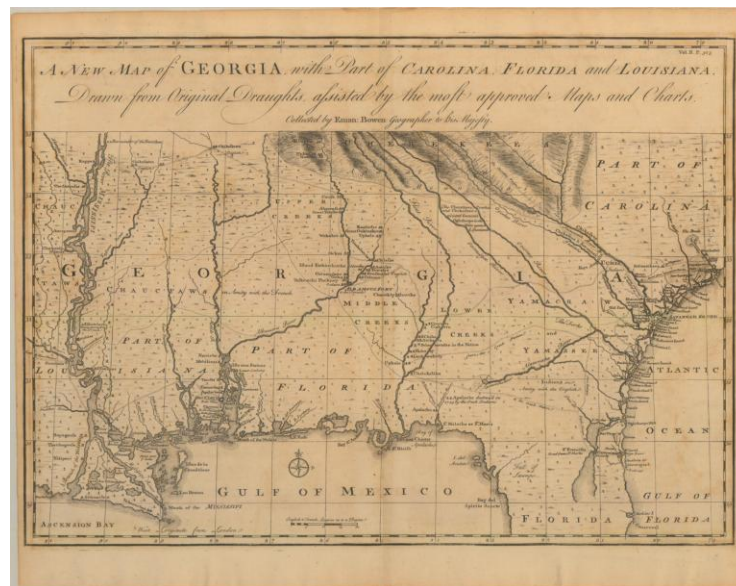


Figure 2.1 Bowen, Emanuel. *A New Map of Georgia, with Part of Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana: Drawn from Original Draughts, Assisted by the Most Approved Maps and Charts.* London: 1764. Courtesy Mississippi Department of Archives and History. MA/78.0002(b).

Antebellum Period

During the early 19th century, the city expanded under the increasing market for cotton. Serving as a port for steamboats to gather crops grown in the region, Natchez became a Southern metropolis thriving off of plantation society with its own dependence on slave labor. The population of wealth was so great that it is said that in 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, there were more millionaires in Natchez than any other American city, except New York, and possibly Philadelphia and Boston (Natchez Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2006). With plenty of wealth, the early plantation owners set out to make Natchez on par with other great cities in the northeastern United States.

Almost everyone in the Natchez region was attached to the production of cotton, whether it was through planting, picking, buying or selling. It was a profitable venture, but it was also very labor intensive. There was planting in the spring and early summer, fall picking, and preparation all year round. Southern plantations built their wealth around a continuous supply of slave labor. For second and third generations of plantation families, slave ownership became more than an economic necessity; it also became a show of income that set the wealthy apart (Sansing and Callon, 2007).

Slave ownership marked a division amongst the White population. Wealthy elite and the poor Whites operated out of the realm of one another. The wealthy elite with an affinity for nobility were known locally as “nabobs” which has come to mean “men of great wealth” (James, 1993, p. 136). Despite their affinity for nobility, none of the nabobs could trace their heritage back to noble blood in Europe. Instead, this population was separated from others in the town only by its economic power, property holdings and unrestrained spending.

Antebellum Natchez historian, D. Clayton James (1993), found that the nabobery consisted of approximately forty families that were select land owners, privileged by their agricultural incomes during the late 1700s and early 1800s. Some of the families lived outside of the town of Natchez, preferring life on the plantation but more often they held property up and down the Mississippi River and made their homes in town. There they found the enjoyments of wealthy homes, travel and luxury more directly available. In addition to the wealthy landowners, a few “large merchants and established professional men” joined the small circle of elites (p. 136).

Because the nabobs were notoriously known for their desire to keep their wealth close, intermarriage among families was common. James (1993) writes, “One such clan included the closely related Surgent, White, Wilkins, Bingaman, Lintot, Minor, Vousdan and Chotart families, each of which held title to vast cotton domains” (p. 137). The weddings were highly celebrated affairs and money was lavishly spent to make guests feel like they were in the midst of the finest of families in the South. In 1840, William Johnson, a free Black barber, reports in his diary that “the N.P. [newspaper] speaks of the wedding Dress Costing \$2000 And of the marriage Contract or Settlement \$100,000—Not bad to take” (Hogan and Davis, 1973, pp. 310-311). With these lavish weddings came unbelievable amounts of wealth as families combined. But because they were so guarded with their money, few records show just how much families amassed over time.

By the 1830s, the families were entering their second and third generations and their tastes were growing more sophisticated. Now kinship was important. Family names went a long way in describing one’s character and place in Natchez society. James (1993) writes, “Manners and appearances absorbed [nabobs’] interests to the

exclusion of concern for the community's general welfare, exchanges of ideas, or attention to national problems" (p. 145). Strange as this artifice of culture seems, to the small group of nabobs in the isolated South, this was the classed world that seemed natural and congenial.

Outsiders (out of class or out of town) had a difficult time gaining access to nabob society. A Northerner, John A. Quitman was however able to find entry into the society after he married the daughter of Henry Turner, a noted nabob. Before the marriage took place, however, Quitman had to sign a contract saying that all the wealth accumulated would go directly to his wife's heirs, including any slaves amassed (James, 1993, p. 138). Others had a much harder time finding a place amongst the nabobs.

James (1993) also traces the 1831 plight of Julius A. Reed, who was at the time a tutor for planter and judge John Perkins. Despite graduating from Yale, the young Connecticut man was not welcomed into nabob society for long. Initially, he was impressed by the new culture he entered into. Soon, however, he saw the divisions in class were vast. He wrote in one of his letters, "Mr. P. is a man of his word of stern integrity & benevolent but too anxious about money tells his sons it is the main thing [sic]" (as quoted in James, 1993, pp. 139-140). He also found fault with the constant expression "our slaves." He writes "I have no such property" (as quoted in James, 1993, p. 140). Eventually, he realized he would never be welcomed into Natchez's elite circle, writing, "Judge P. & C. I conclude do not intend to treat me as an equal" (as quoted in James, 1993, p. 141). It was not long before he resigned from his position, but ironically, he commented on the temptations of Natchez:

Could I enjoy health here I could make a fortune to a certainty I could start with a salary of 1000 dolls. [as bank clerk] & eventually get 3000 or 4000 from which I

could go to planting and soon make my 100 bales per year but the risk is too great, the objection to the mode of life are insurmountable & slave holding must not be thought of. (as quoted in James, 1993, p. 143)

Natchez could be alluring in many ways but less palatable in others.

Descriptions of the plantation families in this time period suggest that they were not at all interested in civic or charitable activities (James, 1993, p.146). The *Arkansas State Gazette and Democrat* was particularly aimed at the Surgent family who owned vast stretches of land from Mississippi to Arkansas. In 1855 the paper reported, "Rich as Croesus; a nabob of Natchez, Mississippi; making his five or six thousand bales of cotton a year; he appears to care for nothing of the wants or desires of the people" (as quoted in James, 1993, p. 146). Other reports from town's people and visitors from elsewhere share similar stories. Howard S. Fulkerson, an employee of Woodville Manufacturing Company said about the nabobs, "Indeed they were slow to regard any as their equals except their own class" (as quoted in James, 1993, p. 146). They were a circle without exterior interests.

Their pursuits, however, did include impressing others with their money. They began to use their new wealth to construct an Americanized version of elegance. They called on architects from around the world to design elaborate homes decorated with ornate carvings and massive front columns that enclosed even more extravagant interiors housing bronze chandeliers, marble fireplaces, hand-woven carpets and silver hardware on doors. Perhaps the most noted example of these homes is Stanton Hall. It was built by Frederick Stanton, who came to Mississippi from Ireland. In Natchez he married Hulda Helm and soon after he accumulated an immense wealth as a cotton planter and broker. The home, which was started in 1849, was built on an entire city

block and marked its completion in 1857. For his dream home, Stanton spared no expense, building rooms that had 17 foot high ceilings and were 72 feet long (Delehanty and Martin, 1996, pp. 132-135).



Figure 2.2 Stanton Hall. (n. d.) The Natchez Garden Club Archive at Magnolia Hall in Natchez, Mississippi

The other side of Natchez society had a less privileged background. There was a middle class made up of mostly commercial and professional groups (James, 1993, p. 165). Much of this group was wealthy enough to be aristocratic, but they were considered middle class because of the comfortable but less opulent homes and lifestyles they endorsed. One example that James (1993) outlines in his book is of H. D. Gurney, a young photographer from Massachusetts (p. 165). In 1860, he had a value of \$100,000, enough to have been considered aristocratic at the time. Yet his name never appears in nabob society presumably because he lived in a modest home and held himself in reserve.

James (1993) writes, "If the line separating the middle class from the upper class is difficult to draw, even harder to delineate is the distinction between the middle and lower white classes" (p. 166). The "lower class" was made up of mostly wage earners such as merchants, clerks, and craftsmen. James describes the division further, saying, "Besides the above-mentioned 'respectable' lower-class whites there were also those of disrepute, such as slave traders and operators of houses of prostitution" (pp. 168-169).

Some of this population enjoyed "Natchez Under the Hill," which welcomed the river industry that brought with it boatmen, traders and freed men of color. There were many businesses of "questionable character" such as bars and brothels. But by in large, the various classes, the nabobs, middle to, "lower class" and the boatmen, chose not to mix with one another because of their very different lifestyles (James, 1993, p. 169).

Additionally, James (1993) reports that by 1840, Adams County, where Natchez was seated, had 283 free Blacks. Incidentally this was almost half of the number of free Blacks in the entire state of Mississippi. Most of the free Blacks lived on small farms outside of town. Only 101 lived in Natchez. Despite the White population's efforts to keep free Blacks out of town, in 1861, just before the Civil War, 208 of the 225 free Blacks from Adams County had moved into the city itself (pp. 162-163). One of the more famous free Blacks was William Johnson, a barber who lived in town. Johnson kept a detailed diary that gives insight into antebellum Natchez (Davis, 1973).

Unlike elsewhere in Southern urban centers, the slave population within the city of Natchez climbed greatly between the years 1810 to 1860 (James, 1993, pp.162-163). In 1810 there were only 459 slaves within the city but by 1860 it had increased 464 percent to 2,131 slaves. Most of the increase occurred between 1830 and 1860. "In

the former years there were 76 slave owners in the town, 56 of whom owned five or fewer slaves, while 13 had six to twenty slaves, and 7 held over twenty” (ibid, p. 162).

The increase was significant by the later years though. James writes,

The number of slave holders in 1860 was 382, of whom 257 owned less than six slaves, 113 held six to twenty, and 12 had over twenty slaves....In 1860 A.C.

Britton, a banker and cotton broker, lead the list with thirty-seven slaves, and gunsmith Stephen Odell ranked next with thirty-six. (p. 163)

Plantation owners obviously held more slaves on their plantations; these numbers only reflect the number of slaves in the town of Natchez, not those on the actual plantation farms outside the city. Still, despite the rise in slave population, the average slave owner in 1860 had only 5 slaves.

No matter what station one had in Natchez society, the Mississippi River was considered its saving grace and life line to the rest of the country. In 1811 the *New Orleans*, became the first steamboat to make its way up river. Capitalizing on this new innovation, others followed suit, and the *Natchez Steamboat* soon became one of a mass of other boats. With the nabobs close at hand, however, the steamboats were not used only for cotton shipping but also for enjoyment. Cruises would take travelers back and forth from New Orleans to Natchez, connecting the cities in an intimate manner (James, 1993).

While the river remained the primary method of transportation to and from Natchez, some roads were built connecting Natchez with other areas of Mississippi and even the eastern coast of the country. Most notable and famous was the Natchez Trace, a 450 mile road connecting Natchez with Nashville. As the postal service

developed, the prominence of the road grew even though it was notorious for bandits (James, 1993).

A number of schools were established during the antebellum period in Natchez. The city's first public, coeducational school, the Natchez Institute, was established in 1845 for Whites only (James, 1993, p. 80). It was built on land donated by Alvarez Fisk, who also donated several large sums of money to the school. In the 1850s, the school had grades Kindergarten through 12th grade. They had enrolled as many as 750 students. And more than half of the city's revenue was allotted for the school.

Additionally, years before in 1802, Jefferson College, a military school for boys, was established just five miles outside of Natchez in the small village of Washington. It was one of the country's earliest public institutions of higher learning. The opening was delayed until 1811 because of financial difficulties. It had an elective curriculum. But at the outbreak of the Civil War, the school closed. After the war, the collegiate program reopened but not the preparatory program (James, 1993, p. 227).

In 1818, the Methodist Conference established the Elizabeth Female Academy, also in Washington. Many believe it to be the earliest female college in the nation. The academy closed in 1847 (James, 1993, pp. 226-227).

Although Natchez was thriving in 1860, no one could stop what was coming in the future months. Soon Natchez was caught up in the American Civil War, or, as Natchez residents tend to refer to it, the "War of Northern Aggression."

Civil War

Natchez was a reluctant follower in the Civil War. Many nabobs such as Stephen Duncan, Haller Nutt and the Surgets were hesitant to leave the Union. Still others such as Samuel Boyd, Charles Dahigren and the Metcalfes pledged allegiance to the "Cotton

Republic” (Sansing, Callon, Smith, 2007, p. 109). In 1861, Adams County sent two anti-secession delegates to the Secession Convention. Once they saw that secession was unavoidable, one delegate joined the side of secessionists while the other remained firm in his opposition to war.

On February 4, 1861, the Confederate States of America was formed, and most Natchez citizens gave their allegiance to the South. Over half of the White male population, approximately 1,500 men, enrolled in the Confederate Army. Another 75 men formed a home guard unit that would serve as protection for the city if needed. With fathers and sons now pledging to defend the South, Natchez showed its devotion by throwing its full weight behind the secession cause (Sansing and Callon, 2007, p. 109-110).

Natchez would be important in the Civil War because the Mississippi River would be a strategic victory for either side. The South worked hard to defend it and the North tried to take control of every port along the waterway. With decisive battles in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and New Orleans, Louisiana, Natchez had cause to be nervous that it was next on the list of battlegrounds. On May 12, 1862 the war finally reached Natchez when Union forces docked Under the Hill. The next day, Natchez surrendered (Sansing and Callon, 2007, p. 111-112).

Natchez was saved from the same fate as Atlanta by its kindness to Union forces; however, many of the nabob families took in soldiers. The Nutt family, for example, opened their still unfinished but opulent plantation home to wounded Union soldiers (Delehanty and Martin, 1996 p. 146). Peter Little’s home Rosalie was carefully preserved by Union forces who used the home as their headquarters in Natchez. The Union army packed up all the family’s precious belongings and had them stored in the

attic. They even took care of the massive mirrors in the home by storing them between cotton bales (pp. 85-86). Southern hospitality even applied in war time, especially when such hospitality could protect one's self and one's belongings.

At the urging of Union forces many slaves on plantations up and down the Mississippi River staged revolts. Revolts at Pine Ridge and Second Creek were foiled after White townspeople got word of them and conducted interrogations of several slaves. After it was admitted that indeed revolts were planned, several slaves were executed although it is not known exactly how many (Sansing and Callon, 2007, p. 116).

Once the Union won the battle at Vicksburg they had control of the river. Until the end of the war then, Natchez was totally locked in the hands of the Union forces. On July 13, 1863, Brig. Gen. Thomas E. G. Ransom assumed martial law and took large quantities of ammunition that were being stored in the town. By January 1865, civilian law was slowly restored in Natchez and by late summer Reconstruction was underway (Sansing and Callon, 2007, p. 120).

The war left planters devastated financially. They not only lost their entire slave labor force, but their land was left unplanted for years. No cotton was produced and there was no income. Also 300 soldiers from the Natchez were killed in the war. Many are buried in the National Cemetery in the city (Sansing, Callon, Smith, 2007, p. 128).

Reconstruction

The newly freed slaves craved the education that they had been denied for so many years. In 1864, Natchez opened three schools for freedmen but by 1865 that number shot up to 11 such schools with more than 1,000 students of all ages (Sansing

and Callon, 2007, p. 129). Two colleges were established for higher education for freedmen, Natchez Seminary and Natchez College (James, 1993, p. 220; 227).

Following the Emancipation Proclamation, the population of Blacks increased in the town of Natchez. Though researchers do not have exact numbers, freedmen and women poured into the town looking for jobs. Many saw their economic opportunity come as craftsmen, merchants, and day labors. Some became barbers, cobblers, storekeepers, seamstresses, painters, or plasterers. Often freed women would sell fried catfish and hushpuppies on the streets (Sansing and Callon, 2007, p. 130).

Other freedmen entered the professional fields such as law and medicine. Lewish J. Winston, Col. George Z. Bowles, John Roy Lynch and William Lynch became noted Black attorneys. Dr. J. B. Banks and Dr. Albert Dumas were Black physicians who opened their clinic in 1899 (Sansing, Callon, Smith, 2007).

Some freedmen followed the pattern of White plantation owners. They began to acquire land. The Mazique family bought China Grove at public action in 1869. Eventually the family would own a dozen plantation homes including Oakland, Montrose, and Bourbon Plantations (Delehanty and Martin, 1996). The lands combined made the family one of the most influential Black families in Natchez.

White Mississippi did not welcome this change, however. The White population did not believe the biracial society would survive. As soon as Union forces turned political power back over to the state, White politicians took over and began the legacy of Jim Crowe.

Planters and freedmen haggled over work contracts and concessions were made, but often the freedmen had to soothe the White planters' sense of superiority. Still the fact that the contracts were even used meant Blacks had some legal control

over their own working conditions. Slowly there was a new social order creeping its way into Natchez (Sansing and Callon, 2007, p. 137).

As well as facing a new social structure, plantation owners were suffering from a declining economy. The prices of land and cotton bottomed out. By 1890, sharecropping had replaced large plantation-style farming. The census of 1890 showed 88.26 percent of all Adams County farmers listed themselves as sharecroppers or tenants (Sansing and Callon, 2007, p. 138). Sansing and Callon (2007) write:

At the turn of the century Natchez had three banks, two cotton factories, two cotton seed mills, two lumber mills, and iron foundry, several brick kilns and cotton gins and a cotton compress capable of compressing 5,000 bales a day. (p. 146)

Perhaps even more so in the aftermath of the war, Southerners had to come to terms with their own thorny identity. And so history took on new and greater importance. White Southerners dealt with shame on many levels. For some, it was the shame of being part of an ideology that invested so much in and on slave labor. But for the greater number of Whites, it was the shame of losing the war. With the South's concession to Union forces, many Whites had to reconsider and reestablish their social and economic status. On the other hand, this dramatic change did have a unifying effect as well. Robert Penn Warren (as cited Dewey Grantham 1983) wrote that with the fall of the Confederacy, "the Solid South was born—not only the witless automatism of fidelity to the Democratic Party but the mystique of prideful 'difference,' identity, and defensiveness" (p. 9)

Jack E. Davis (2004) points out that during this period of transition, Whites could no longer presuppose their place as the superior and moral citizenry so they began to

reconstruct the past in a way that would reflect more favorably on Whites. Davis writes that “their history was white by design; it was about, produced for, and controlled by whites” (p. 31). Through the productions of historic myths about the South and in particular about race relations, residents of Natchez were protecting and reconstructing White culture. Many of the historic myths projected on history a harmonious division between races that both Whites and Blacks preferred. Reluctantly and only recently have the White residents of Natchez attempted to understand the underbelly of Southern race relations through the recovery of Blacks’ history in Natchez.

1930s and Industrialization

During Reconstruction, the labor system had developed into a few White plantation owners and more Black and poor White sharecroppers, relying on a form of work that tied the freed Blacks back to the patriarchal system that had been in place prior to the war. Slowly, however, factory work developed in Natchez and with it came more liberation for Blacks, though the racial system stayed segregated (Davis, Gardner and Gardener, 2009).

Along with the usual sawmill and cotton mills, Natchez also had a cannery, meatpacking plant, coffee roasting and grinding company, brickyards, foundry, and match factory. Timber mills were the first to migrate to the area in the early nineteenth century, providing the local meeting grounds for both White and Black workers. But by the twentieth century, timber had become a mainstay in the Natchez economy. In other more rural areas of Mississippi, timber companies kept a predominantly White workforce. But in Natchez the timber mills were different. During the late nineteenth century, Black workers had begun to replace Whites in mills. In fact, Davis (2001)

writes, “By the 1930s, timber-related industry employed more blacks than did any other type of work except farming” (p. 119).

Soon the perception was that mill work in Natchez had been reduced to “nigger work” (Davis, 2001, p. 119). Employment in a predominately Black labor force made Whites consider the work beneath them. Most Whites preferred to keep their interactions with Blacks to a minimum so they voluntarily withdrew to their own familiar world. Where Blacks and Whites did work together, Whites had better jobs as managers and supervisors and Blacks had the labor jobs that paid less. Davis (2001) says, “Life and living had always been defined by race, and blacks expected nothing different from southern society. As long as any kind of mill or factory operated near Natchez, separate jobs and separate pay had been the standard” (p. 118).

Blacks had both lost and gained from this factory system. In some ways, it was merely an extension or continuation to the principles of plantation culture. Whites assumed the roles as plantation landlords or factory bosses, and Blacks worked for low wages under poor conditions. Despite mimicking the old familiar ways of plantation life, factories did offer alternatives to more degrading, lower paying jobs. For example, mill workers enjoyed higher pay than agriculture workers. Additionally, factory and mill workers were treated less like property and more like workers than their agricultural counterparts. Also, at the end of the day, factory and mill owners could not exercise as much control over the private lives of their workers as landlords did (Davis, Gardener and Gardener, 2009).

At the same time, and in contrast to Black males’ movement into the public labor force, Black women were most often employed as domestic servants. There were few other choices for them. Black women who worked in White households did so for

exploitative wages. So diminished were the wages that even during the Great Depression, most White families in Natchez still employed Black housekeepers (Davis, 2001).

Reactions to this transformation of Blacks' place in society did not come easy for Natchez. There was protest over each new mill or factory that was put up. In 1939, for example, Armstrong Tire and Rubber Company was opened. In response, the Natchez Garden Club women were not sure what to make of the company and all the "common" people. Davis (2001) writes, "Many members from the old-family elite had objected to Armstrong's construction....Some opposed industry all together. It did not fit, they said, with Natchez's Old South image" (p. 117).

Hanging on to the image of the Old South, many Whites became a part of the growing Lost Cause Movement that had started in the South after the Civil War but now found momentum as Blacks were integrating into public society.

The Lost Cause Movement

The Lost Cause Movement developed as many Whites felt honor should be paid to the antebellum character that was shown by the Confederate soldiers who fought and often died during the Civil War. It is the name given to the literary and intellectual movement that attempted to reconcile the traditional White society of the Southern United States to the defeat of the Confederate States in the Civil War. Those that took part in the movement depicted the Confederacy as noble and its leaders as chivalrous protectors to an earlier way of life. They believed the South's defeat was not due to superior military skill and honor but to the overwhelming number of forces on the Northern side.

The term “Lost Cause” first appeared in the title of an 1866 book by historian Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates*. But it was made famous by a series of articles written by Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early in the 1870s for the Southern Historical Society. Jefferson Davis’s 1881 two volume publication entitled *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* marks another important book of the movement. In it, the South is romanticized and separated from slavery.

One of the main tenets of the Lost Cause movement is that the Confederate leaders such as Robert E. Lee and “Stonewall” Jackson represent the merits of Southern aristocracy. This is in contrast to Northern leaders who were typified as having low moral standards, and who forced their Southern counterparts to disgraces such as Sherman’s march and the burning of Southern towns. Another tenet is that the Confederacy was fighting for states’ rights rather than over the continuation of slavery. For this, they believe secession was justifiable when facing Northern aggression. Finally the Lost Cause saw slavery as a benevolent act where slaves were loyal to their masters, mimicking a father-child relationship.

The most known image of the Lost Cause was Robert E. Lee. David Ulbrich (2000) writes:

Already revered during the war, Robert E. Lee acquired a divine mystique within Southern culture after it. Remembered as a leader whose soldiers would loyally follow him into every fight no matter how desperate, Lee emerged from the conflict to become an icon of the Lost Cause and the ideal of the antebellum Southern gentleman, an honorable and pious man who selflessly served Virginia and the Confederacy. (p.1221)

Despite accepting full responsibility for the defeat at Gettysburg, Lee remained celebrated in the minds of many Southerners.

A later sign of the Lost Cause mentality is evident in Douglas Southall Freeman's 1934 biography of Lee. In it, Lee's subordinates were blamed for the errors that lost decisive battles. James Longstreet, Richard Ewell, Jubal Early, J.E.B. Stuart, A.P. Hill, George Pickett and others were held responsible in an attempt to draw criticism away from Lee.

Thomas F. Dixon, Jr.'s 1905 book, *The Clansman* (later adapted into the 1915 movie *Birth of a Nation*) gave another depiction of the Lost Cause. It portrays the Ku Klux Klan as the protectors of Southern tradition, Southern womanhood and White supremacy through terrorist actions. The Klan was a popular group in the South during the 1860s forward and saw a rebirth in the 1920s. It was an active organization in the Natchez region, committing 34 lynchings from 1860 to 1934 before going underground. Texts such as Dixon's celebrate the actions of this group.

Another influential book with regard to the Lost Cause mentality was Margaret Mitchell's 1936 novel, *Gone with the Wind*, and later, in 1939, the film by the same name. In the novel and film, Southerners were depicted as noble and heroic characters that lived in a romantic South that ultimately succumbs to the North's destructive forces.

Natchez Garden Club

Following the wave of women's club activity that I outlined in Chapter One, the Natchez Garden Club was organized in 1928 with their early objective centered on agriculture as a means of beautifying Natchez's Southern landscapes and as a way of memorializing the ideals of the Lost Cause. In 1931, under the leadership of club president, Katherine Miller, The Club was set to host the annual convention of the

Mississippi State Confederation of Garden Clubs (Cooper, 2006). As host, The Club was to welcome fellow clubs to their area by giving private tours of many local gardens that showed off the town's beautiful live oaks, azaleas, and camellias. Organized to take place March 19th through the 21st the club had made all necessary arrangements when an unexpected event changed all of their plans. A late frost came, destroying all of Natchez's spring blossoms. Quickly, the club women met to discuss their options. Of course, as many Southern women would, members wanted to present themselves at their best. So, as president, Katherine Miller offered an alternative to the private garden tours. She suggested that the Garden Club members open up their homes for a showing. Many of these women were descendants of Natchez's early nabobs so their homes were in fact the same residences that plantation owners had built and lived in. Grudgingly, members consented and set off preparing their homes.

When the March date arrived, eighty federation members gathered in the town and were given a guide that listed twenty homes that were open for public viewing. They were shown through the homes by the Natchez club women who told the historic past of the homes, showed rare antiques, and told the families' stories. This move proved to be a popular success amongst federation members who eagerly shared their experiences with others back home elsewhere in the state.

Inquiries about the show of homes came into The Club from all over the region and Miller, seeing an opportunity, proposed that The Club consider hosting a tour of homes the following Spring. Using her own sensibilities, she swayed the business community and city leaders to join with The Club in their efforts to energize the local economy. And in the midst of the Great Depression The Club hosted the first official Spring Pilgrimage in 1932.

In March, over the course of six days, twenty-six homes were opened to the public including Miller's own home, Hope Farm. What's more, the leader persuaded the club ladies hosting the open house tours to don hoopskirts so that they could enhance the feel of the Old South. In addition to the show of homes, The Club organized a parade through downtown and put on a pageant that depicted scenes of life from the antebellum period. The Pilgrimage was so successful that it was extended one day.



Figure 2.3 Belles on Display. (n. d.). The Natchez Garden Club Archives at Magnolia Hall in Natchez, Mississippi

Evaluations of the event reported that tourists had spent over fifty-thousand dollars in restaurants, hotels, and souvenir shops (Cooper, 2006). The increased tourist revenue came at a crucial time for Natchez. It provided badly needed funds for architectural restoration to many of the homes and businesses as well as restoring grandeur to many of the old families who had been heading for financial decay. And thus began the annual tradition that was expanded to four weeks and publicized all over the country. Miller, herself was responsible for much of the advertising as she and Edith

Wyatt Moore toured the country giving lectures and advertising Natchez's unique Southern character.

With such financial success however, it was not surprising that a division soon arose. The Club itself was receiving a large portion of the Pilgrimage money through ticket sales alone and a dispute surfaced around how the profits should be distributed (Cooper, 2006). Some of The Club members believed that the money should be used to purchase and restore landmarks in the city. Others argued that the majority of the funds should be returned to the homeowners of the tour so that they could make their own repairs and purchase the necessary decorative ornamentations. Once Miller joined the side of homeowners in 1936, The Club chose to split. Those aligned with Miller broke away and started the Pilgrimage Club, taking with them some seventeen of the twenty-six homes for tour. Legal battles ensued over the next several years but finally following World War II in 1946, both the Garden Club and the Pilgrimage Club opted for a mutually satisfying end to the conflict. They united efforts once again under the shared board of directors and that is how the Garden Club Pilgrimage stands today.

During the 1930s, 40s and 50s The Club maintained a membership of around 100 members. Dues were around 50 dollars annually (amount varied by year). The Club met once a month at various club members' homes. Typically club meetings included a welcome, prayer, club business as it related to the Fall or Spring Pilgrimages as well as a guest speaker. The speaker might speak on gardening, fashion or historic conservation, as it was one of The Club's primary goals. The Club owned two homes, House on Ellicott's Hill and Magnolia Hall, where its headquarters is today.

The Club had a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and parliamentarian. It also had an executive board and an advisory board. It had standing

committees for the Confederate Pageant, finance and budget, history and archives, hospitality, house on Ellicott's Hill, Legislative, Magnolia Hall (a home owned by The Club), membership, program, publicity, tourism liason, and Junior Garden Club. Special committees were formed for various purposes such as beautification and litter, birds and plant life, courtesy and resolutions, flower shows and historic preservation.

For The Club, the past is very influential over its present. As Whitlock (2007) explains, "the past *is* present in the South and exerts it influence over the reproduction of White Southern homeplace" (emphasis added, p. 59). This need to reinstate the past serves one major goal, to reinforce the patriarchy. Whitlock writes what many advocate is a reclaiming of the male dominant home, the comfortable, safe, protective home. When patriarchal structures of gender within the home are affirmed, homeplace as sanctuary of sameness is also affirmed. On a wider scale, the reinstating of White males as the head of the social hierarchy creates an illusion that things are as they should be: like they were prior to the war.



Figure 2.4 Socializing. (n. d.). The Natchez Garden Club Archives at Magnolia Hall in Natchez, Mississippi

Conclusion

Through the stories of The Club and its members, the club women hope to highlight women's roles as Southern historians most important sponsors. With their complicated and controversial pasts, these ladies could be represented in a single dimension, but Joan Scott (1996) challenges theorists to do more by not diminishing their feminist efforts. She provides us with her own perspective as a model,

I do not think of these women as exemplary heroines. Instead, I think of them as sites—historical locations or markers—where crucial political and cultural contests are enacted and can be examined in some detail. To figure a person—

in this case, a woman—as a place or location is not to deny her humanity; it is rather to recognize the many factors that constitute her agency, the complex and multiple ways in which she is constructed as a historical actor. (p. 16)

This said, Linda Gordon (1986) says, “Our collective goal ought to be to advance a theoretical framework to our scholarship that transcends the victim/heroine, domination/resistance dualism and incorporates the varied experiences of women” (p. 25). As such, the Natchez Garden Club represents the considerable cultural force of club women in the South during the period between 1930s and 1950s.

CHAPTER 3:

BELLES AND BOOKS

Textbooks also keep students in the dark about the nature of history. History is a furious debate informed by evidence and reason. Textbooks encourage students to believe that history is facts to be learned.

James W. Loewen (1996, p. 16)

The Natchez Garden Club houses its archives in a drafty, second story room at Magnolia Hall. I became familiar with its period dresses, hoop skirts, and gardening books as well as the layers of dust that covered nearly everything in the room. I spent many weeks going through three filing cabinets that contained everything from tax files to The Club's yearbooks dating back to 1934. Shuffling through the pages of these yearbooks, I landed almost immediately on the pages of committees. The Club had committees for beautification, hospitality, tours and textbooks. Textbooks? What was a committee for the oversight of textbooks doing in the city's garden club?

Not only did I discover that The Club was involved in textbook oversight but I found a textbook written by club member, Pearl Guyton, as well as many other books written by club members on the subject of Natchez and that there were many other books written by club members on the subject of Natchez. This allowed me to see just how the women of The Club used books as the literacy tools to convey their ideological messages about the Old South and the Lost Cause.

As I discuss in Chapter One, literacy sponsorship is often an unofficial form of support. In this case, however, the women of The Club were directly linked with the widespread publication of several books and therefore they became public literacy sponsors. In the public realm of schooling, Brandt (2001a) writes, “the aim of universal literacy began as an imperative of the Christian mission and, by the middle of the nineteenth century, had shifted to secular interests of nation building, social conformity and civic responsibility” (pp. 27-28). It is evident, as this chapter shows, that The Club, through its sponsorship in public schools and in the wider community, sought to form a cohesive, homogeneous view of the South that continued the Lost Cause mentality.

Brandt (2001a) suggests that the effects of literacy sponsorship can be unexpectedly contradictory, writing, “Expanding literacy undeniably has been an instrument for more democratic access to learning, political participation, and upward mobility. At the same time, it has become one of the sharpest tools for stratification and denial of opportunity” (p. 2). The Club was producing a Southern cultural literacy that upheld upper class White values as their model for Southern heritage.

Brandt (2001a) writes, “Tracing the sponsors who develop and deliver curricular materials to their schools can heighten students’ awareness of who is interested in their reading and writing skills and why” (p. 44). Likely none of the students who read *Our Mississippi* knew that The Club was participating in their schooling. But it is like the little leaguers with logos on their back, the students are unaware that they are adopting the ideals of their sponsor, The Club. Furthermore, Brandt (2001a) writes,

These standards [school based standards], which usually come in the form of objective aims, goals, requirements, outcome criteria, and so on, usually mask

the struggles among competing parties that have gone into their making. They almost always deliver, in unquestioned ways, the prevailing interests of dominant economies. (p. 4)

This forces us to reimage schools not as organs of democracy but as managed marketplaces.

To address these intricacies this chapter will discuss the school sponsored literacy practices of The Club through its activities with Pearl Guyton's (1934) textbook, *Our Mississippi*. Next I will discuss Katherine Miller's (1938) *Natchez of Long Ago and the Pilgrimage*. And finally I will talk about Nola Nance Oliver's (1940) book *Natchez: Symbol of the Old South*. In it I argue that The Club was (re)producing a particular version of Southern history embodied the Lost Cause that was both racist and classist and yet also progressive in other ways. As Henry M. Levin (1976) states, "The educational system will always be applied towards serving the role of cultural transmission and preserving the status quo" (p. 24). The educational endeavors that The Club participates in, reinforces the status of the club women by preserving a White women's place as morally superior.

At the suggestion of current club member, Sarah Hankens,⁵ I looked into the name Pearl Guyton. I discovered that Guyton was a member of The Club for many years as well as a teacher at the local high school in the 1930s and following decades. She wrote a textbook in 1934, originally titled *The History of Mississippi from Indian Times to the Present Day*, which was used in Natchez schools up to 1952. After talking to antique book dealers in Natchez to no avail, I turned to the one place any researcher

⁵ Names of current members have been changed as some requested anonymity.

knows is the place of last resort, EBay. I entered Pearl Guyton's name and the search words "Mississippi textbook" and after a couple of tries, before my eyes was a book called *Our Mississippi* (1952) (the title had changed but the text remained the same). After establishing that the author was Pearl Vivian Guyton of Natchez, Mississippi, I placed a bid that was far too high. Alas, I won the bid and then had a copy of the mythic textbook that I had hunted for over a year. Ebay turned out to be a saving grace. There, I also found Katherine Miller's (1938) *Natchez of Long Ago and the Pilgrimage* and Nola Nance Oliver's (1940) *Natchez: Symbol of the Old South*.

Method

After getting a copy of the 1952 textbook, *Our Mississippi*, I looked at the original book published in 1934 and housed at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson, Mississippi. I did a detailed reading of *Our Mississippi* and coded for themes that emerged. I also looked through textbook adoption records from the 1940s and 50s (no records from the 1930 exist at neither the local or state level) at the Mississippi Department of Education in Jackson, Mississippi. Following my study of the textbook, I began an analysis of other books that club women had written in 1930, 40s, and 50s. I found Miller's (1938) *Natchez of Long Ago and the Pilgrimage* and read it carefully. Finally I located Oliver's (1940) book, *Natchez: Symbol of the Old South* and studied it. Both were coded like the previous book.

Southern Books for Southern Schools

Publishers have rarely dismissed the importance of the South in calculating their potential sales. It is no wonder then that publishers established intimate relationships with Southern committees that have the authority to approve texts for the Southern

states. For example, in June of 1940, the Mississippi State Textbook Rating and Purchasing Board listened as Mr. Riley⁶ spoke urging the adoption of “Southern books for Southern schools.”⁷ Consequently the South has left an indelible mark on the textbook industry as well as the literature that many Southerners read throughout their school lives. Beyer and Apple (1998) sums this belief up stating, “The political and ideological climate of these primarily [S]outhern states often determines the content and form of the purchased curriculum throughout the rest of the nation” (p. 168). During the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the long term influence of books produced for mass audiences was shifting demographically to the Northeast. DeBow states that there are three groups that allowed and promoted this shift (as quoted in Moreau, 2006, pp. 58-59). He argues the first group was abolitionists whose agenda was against the South for its attitudes towards slavery. The second faction was the Southerners themselves who had previously and seemingly been willing to adopt books written from a Northeastern perspective but who were now beginning to question their decision. Finally, the third party was the Northern publishing houses who printed whatever would sell. And it was, after all, a risky publishing venture to produce a text just for the South. For one, there was limited means to transport texts but secondly and perhaps more importantly, there was a legacy of private schooling in the South. Publishers could not be sure that their target market would buy enough books to make it a profitable venture for them.

⁶ No first name is given.

⁷ Textbook Adoption Records, June 27, 1940, p. 29, Mississippi State Department of Education in Jackson, Mississippi.

In the South however, there was a turning tide that feared the Northern textbooks and the de facto curriculum would undermine the unique qualities and ways of life in the South (Moreau, 2006). Many felt the South was being portrayed as evil and immoral. To avoid this, the Southern states began implementing distinctly Southern curriculums that retold history from the perspective of White, upper class Southerners. A significant movement to produce textbooks especially for the South emerged in the 1840s “as disputes over the extension of slavery in the territories crystallized political and cultural differences between Northern and Southern states” (Moreau, 2006, p. 58). This effort to redefine the Southern curriculum through textbooks would unite and divide historians and publishers, Confederate veterans and educational reformers, all to justify the way Jim Crow should be carried out in the South.

In *Schoolbook Nation*, Moreau (2006) writes, “Ironically, it was Reconstruction, which Southern texts would later depict as the grimmest chapter in American history that helped to make [Southern textbooks] widespread use possible” (p. 60). The new Republican-led state government established public schools. Between 1871 and 1890, the percentage of the Southern population that was enrolled in public schools nearly doubled (Moreau, 2006, p. 60). This growing audience then made it possible for the publishing houses to print more Southern textbooks. In 1869, a group of former Confederates established the Southern Historical Society to explain to the rest of the nation the principles for which the South stood. This group also directed writers to produce textbooks for the South. Authors such as John S. Blackburn and William N. McDonald responded by publishing texts such as the 1869 textbook, *A Southern School*

History of the United States. The authors of these texts tried to present an accurate depiction of the South, by which they meant the White South.

Soon Southern states began to go the way of state publication, which would allow money to stay in the state and give more local control as to what would be written in the textbooks. More groups associated with Confederate veterans, such as the Daughters of the Confederacy, sought to rewrite the history that was being taught to schoolchildren. Moreau (2006) writes, “They wanted to use the past to legitimate the new social order they were creating” (p. 79). So it was hardly coincidental that the Southern textbook industry peaked in the 1890s and at the turn of the century.

The Mississippi Department of Education said that the textbook *Our Mississippi* was written in 1935 and used until 1952, 17 years. How is it then that this Southern textbook was actually adopted by schools after its publication? First, it is important to make the point that this process includes the ideological, political, and economic sources of production and distribution and the socially organized efforts through which knowledge is made (Apple, 1985; Wexler, 1982). Wexler (1982) argues that curriculum-making processes are undertaken by different social groups searching for ways to affirm their beliefs and worldview and to alter dominant meanings and practices.

Although records on the textbook committees that adopted *Our Mississippi* are missing from both the Adam’s County School Board and the Mississippi State Department of Education, what is known is that The Club had a textbook committee at the time that club member and author Pearl Guyton wrote the book *Our Mississippi*, and that the text was adopted by the Natchez schools. This suggests that at the very least The Club was interested in monitoring and influencing what the schools taught. While

there is no record showing that club members ever served on a state-level textbook committee, The Mississippi Department of Education has textbook adoption records showing that, at the state level, Mr. H. B. Boutwell of Natchez, Mississippi was on the textbook committee (Mississippi Textbook Rating and Purchasing Board, 1940). This is important because Mrs. H. B. Boutwell was a member of The Club. Because of The Club's interest in textbooks, as shown by their forming a committee on the subject, it is likely Mrs. Boutwell had influence on her husband's views as well.

Pearl Guyton, *Our Mississippi*

Club member Pearl Vivian Guyton was born in November 1887 and grew up just miles from the home of Nathan Bedford Forrest, founder of the Ku Klux Klan. She was there, right in the midst of social unrest due to the issue of racial segregation. She attended Blue Mountain College, a Christian college established by General Mark Perrin Lowrey, who felt that the South's recovery would be enhanced by educating its young women. After graduating as Mistress of English in 1906, in 1916 she enrolled herself (her father also signed on her behalf but it is significant that she enrolled herself) in the University of Mississippi for a Bachelor's Degree. She graduated in 1917 with a degree in education. She notes in her brief biography located in the textbook that she went out of the South to do graduate work at the University of Chicago and at Columbia University. She attended the University of Chicago in 1914 for one quarter, then returned autumn 1918 for a year. She returned again in the Summer of 1923 and advanced to candidacy for the Advanced Master (A.M.) in English in July, 1923. She was next enrolled for courses in the Summer of 1924, but did not pass her A.M. exam that quarter. Guyton took additional coursework in the summers of 1926, 1933 and

1942 but never received a degree from the University of Chicago. At Columbia University's Teachers College she took two classes in the Summer of 1927 and two classes in the Summer 1935; however, she never received a degree from Columbia, either. Still, the ongoing returns to these colleges show someone who sees learning as a lifelong endeavor that she approached with passion. She came to Natchez in 1923 and taught to 1953 at Natchez High, the Whites-only school in Natchez. In addition to teaching, she was very active in the community. She was a chairman for the Daughters of the American Revolution, and a member the Natchez Trace Association, the State Board of Girl Reserves, and the Mississippi Federation of Women's Clubs, as well as a member of the Natchez Garden Club, though no years are known. In addition to her activities in various clubs and organizations, she was a prolific writer who authored two books, including the textbook, as well as various tourist pamphlets.⁸

Sarah Hankens described her high school teacher and head of the history department, Ms. Guyton, as never having been married and "a bit frumpy and short," adding that "she was not well-liked because she was so strict." Hankens told the story that when Guyton read and marked the first history paper of the year, one could be assured that was the grade one would receive at the end of the year; "she must not have read anything after that first one," Hankens joked. While Guyton loved history, Hankens reports that she especially liked current issues of civic and social importance. This is reflected in the later chapters of *Our Mississippi*.

The author of *Our Mississippi* brings with her a past that is laden with racial prejudices. It is therefore no wonder that the text can be seen in light of its notions on

⁸ Guyton, P. V. (1942). *Pine Knots*. St. Louis, MO. Webster Publishing Company; Guyton, P. V. (1945).

race, class and gender. The textbook reflects some of The Club's beliefs as it was very interested in the ways that history represented the South.

Like a high school student, I sat down to read *Our Mississippi* with the assumption that it would be a boring text full of facts. Reading through the lens of a little more age and education, I realize textbooks are not just a list of truths. Instead, like any book, they are written from a particular perspective. I was amazed at how openly racist the text was. More subtle were the classist overtones which were even more relevant when I considered the fact that this text was put in the schools by wealthy, White women. Still I questioned the fairness of my method, judging a text written in the past by standards written today. In order to keep *Our Mississippi* in perspective with other texts from its time, I will compare it with Mabel B. Fant and John C. Fant's (1924) textbook entitled *History of Mississippi: A School Reader*.⁹

Before I begin analyzing *Our Mississippi*, I must note the titles of the text. The original title was *The History of Mississippi from Indian Times to the Present Day*. Emphasis should be given to the first two words in the title, "*The History*." Such phrasing suggests that there is only one version of Mississippi history giving way to the trap of a grand narrative. Even after the name of the textbook changed to *Our Mississippi*, the question arises who is included in "*Our Mississippi*."

The textbook is 466 pages long. The chapters included are: (1) The Indians of Mississippi; (2) Early Explorers of the Mississippi Valley; (3) Under the Flag of France; (4) Under the Flag of England; (5) Under the Flag of Spain; (6) As a United States Territory; (7) Early Years of Statehood; (8) From Depression to Secession; (9)

⁹ This textbook is the only Mississippi textbook I have been able to obtain that is a relative contemporary to the textbook *Our Mississippi*.

Secession and the Onset of War; (10) The Campaign for Control of the Mississippi; (11) The Problems of Reconstruction; (12) Recovery and Progress, 1875-1952; (13) Mississippi in Two World Wars; (14) The Government of Mississippi; (15) Developments in Education; (16) The Arts and Cultural Progress; (17) Health and Social Welfare Problems; (18) The Land and the People; (19) The New Agriculture in Mississippi; (20) Mississippi as a Cotton State; (21) Other Farm Products and Developments; (22) Balancing Agriculture with Industry; (23) Oil and Other Materials; (24) Forestry and Related Industries; and (25) Transportation and Commerce. Images include illustrations and photographs.

Our Mississippi can be divided into two sections. The first half of the text tells the history of the state, while the second half informs readers of civic and social programs such as education, manufacturing, and arts and culture. Similarly, the text's overall perspective follows that division. The historical overview is stifled by discriminatory thinking while the civic and social programs section tends to paint a more hopeful future for the South and Mississippi women in particular.

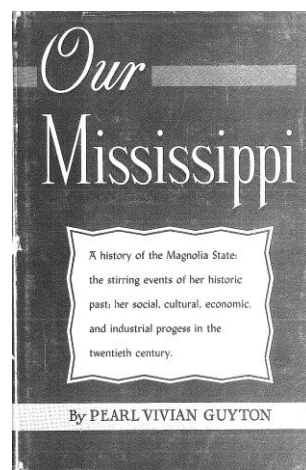


Figure 3.1 Textbook Cover. Guyton, Pearl. (1952). *Our Mississippi*. Austin, Texas: The Steck Company.

The text begins with a forward by Blue Mountain College Professor David E. Guyton, brother to author Pearl Guyton. There he states that because the people of Mississippi were “men and women of purest Anglo-Saxon stock to be found in the United States, Mississippi merits the love, the loyalty, and the deep devotion of her sons and daughters” (Guyton, 1952, p. v). Moreover he writes,

Mississippi has marched steadily, proudly, and majestically onward and upward, until now she has a population of over two million, about equally divided between the white race and the Negroes, dwelling together in mutual good will, sympathetic understanding and readiness to render a helping hand in solving the many-sided problems of the state. (p. v)

These words summarize the perspective of the text to come well. First, “purest Anglo-Saxon stock” is coded language for pure White-blooded people (not French or Spanish), who the text will later show rule the state and “protected” the population from the “incompetent and uneducated” Black populace (p. v; p. 217). It promotes the belief that the most important developments are traceable to Europe’s White race. Additionally, it shows the continuation of what Loewen (2007) calls the “magnolia myth” which states that Whites ruled Black with no real harm to either race and even to the betterment of the Black population (p. 137).

Secondly the above quote states that “Mississippi has marched steadily, proudly, and majestically onward and upward” (Guyton, 1952, p. v). This reflects the tendency among textbooks to show a constantly progressive movement in society. Loewen (2003) says that with this constant progressive myth there is “No need to ponder whether the nation or all humankind are on the right path” (p. 282). In *Race and*

Manifest Destiny, Horsman (1981) shows how the idea of “God on our side” was used to legitimize the idea that Whites were superior to Blacks and Native Americans (p. 5). Perhaps this is why Pearl Guyton takes such a critical tone in her early chapters that focus on Native American life and their interactions with settlers.



Figure 3.2 “Indian Dance at Nanih Waiva” in Guyton, Pearl. (1952). *Our Mississippi*. Austin, Texas: The Steck Company. p. 1.

Guyton (1952) begins her book with a discussion of Native Americans, whom she refers to as “red men” (p. 2).¹⁰ She makes many broad generalizations such as the one that is in the first chapter. She writes, “The Indian women did all the work. The men gambled, hunted, fished, and made war” (p. 3). This suggests the lineage of women as being morally superior and rests shame on the men for their supposedly brut behaviors. These generalizations and harsh characterization clearly want to present the White men as the saviors who were morally superior. In fact the text goes on to challenge the spiritual practices of the Native Americans and their “many strange beliefs” (p. 4). Additionally the text applied fear tactics, stating that “Each warrior wore the scalps of his

¹⁰ Throughout the text there are discriminatory slurs such as “red men,” “Negroes,” “half-bloods,” “scalawags,” “carpetbaggers” and “cripples.”

victims dangling from his belt, and the more scalps a man had, the greater warrior he was thought to be” (p. 7). Comparing it with the alternative text, Fants’ (1924) *History of Mississippi*, the use of the phrase red man was not out of character. In the Fants’ text the descriptions of various Native American groups were more detailed though they were not necessarily favorable towards Native Americans. Guyton’s text, as expected, focused more heavily on the Natchez Indians which she presents as particularly cruel.

Guyton tells of the early explores of the Mississippi Valley. Christopher Columbus and Hernando de Soto are given credit for “discover[ing]” the New World despite the fact that Native Americans had lived there for hundreds of years (Guyton, 1952, p. 21). The text paints a portrait of Columbus and de Soto as men of upstanding character. This is revealed even in the picture of de Soto in the text. He stands nobly with his head held high and his hand raised to the heavens. This follows Lowen’s (2003) argument that we believe “He [Columbus or de Soto] was good and so are we [White people]” (p. 60). The fact that Columbus and de Soto treated Native Americans harshly is lost. Loewen further points out that

No one likes to think of himself or herself as a bad person. To treat badly another person whom we consider a reasonable human being creates a tension between act and attitude that demands resolution. We cannot erase what we have done, and to alter our future behavior may not be in our interest. To change our attitude is easier. (p. 62)

It was less problematic to defend the White men’s actions than to admit their failures as human beings. Still as Loewen so aptly puts it, “When [textbooks] glamorize explorers such as de Soto just because they are White, our histories offend all people of

color....When they glorify Columbus, our textbooks prod us towards identifying with the oppressor” (p. 69). In comparison, the Fants’ (1924) text also talks favorably about Columbus and “bold” Hernando de Soto (p. 15).



Figure 3.3 “Discovering the Mississippi by Hernando de Soto” in Guyton, Pearl. (1952). *Our Mississippi*. Austin, Texas: The Steck Company. p. 17.

The text continues this same attitude towards Native Americans by admitting openly that they were used. The text states that they were befriended “for the double purpose of gaining wealth for the colony and of strengthening the hold of France throughout the region” (Guyton, 1952, p. 38). It goes on to say that after the Fort Rosalie massacre, “the Great Sun, chief of the Natchez Indians, took his seat in the tobacco shed of the fort and watched with pleasure as the heads of his victims were piled at his feet” (p. 46). This continues the fear tactics that Guyton uses to show favorably the White men and opposition to Native Americans.

The first mention of slavery comes in two short sentences about the Black Codes, saying that they “intended to protect the slaves” from “certain cruel practices

which had been common” (Guyton, 1952, p. 44). No attention is given to those cruel practices such as lynchings, segregation laws, and harsh racial protocol. Guyton does not elaborate anywhere in the text about the treatment of slaves and Blacks in the South. This silencing of the Black voice is felt throughout the text.

Next the text outlines life in Mississippi under English and Spanish rule. Chapter Five of the textbook in particular talks about agriculture in Mississippi. It goes on for three pages talking about tobacco, indigo, and cotton with no mention of slavery. This once again omits the Black voice from the history of the South. This silencing of Black voices privileges Whites. What is left is the notion that it is natural for one group to dominate another by excluding the other group.

The text goes on to discuss Mississippi, first as an American colony and then in its early days of statehood. It continues much the same way as the previous text does but with one exceptional example about the way Native Americans were deprived of their land. Guyton (1952) writes,

There was no question in the minds of the people of Mississippi that the Indians must give up their lands and move away if the state was to prosper. The land held by the red men was rich and would be highly productive if the *forests* were cleared away and the soil cultivated. The Indians, however, made no attempt to develop the soil; they merely roamed the forests, hunting and fishing....It seemed fair that the Indians should take these western lands in exchange for the ones they were holding, but it was a real problem to convince the Indians themselves that they should do so. (pp. 132-133)

Guyton sides with the White man, not considering how it would feel to be forced out of one's home.

Next the text deals with the upcoming succession of Mississippi and the South. On page 153 is the first depiction of Black life¹¹: a group of what are presumed to be slaves picking cotton. No commentary is offered of the picture other than the statement that "the cotton industry in the rich Delta land was an important factor" in the recovery of an earlier depression (Guyton, 1952, p. 153). The text fails to recognize the wellbeing of the Mississippi rest on the back of slave labors.

Not only does it omit the telling of slavery but it denies that it was the cause of the forthcoming "War Between the States."¹² The text says, "The holding of slaves within the boundaries of the Southern States was not the fundamental cause of the quarrel over slavery" (Guyton, 1952, p. 163). Instead it attributes the war to the expansion of slavery and states' rights. While this is true in part, slavery in the South was obviously a large contributing factor in the war.

This text fails to show the atrocity of slavery, which is very damaging. Just as destructive, however, is its failure to show the impact that slavery had on White life. Slavery gave wealth, privilege and power to White people, but the text does not suggest causation of any sort. Loewen (2003) writes,

To function adequately in civic life in our trouble times, students must learn what causes racism...[it] stems primarily from two related historical process: taking

¹¹ There are only two depictions of Black life in the entire text. The other picture shows Black women selling jams and jellies.

¹² In the index under the subject "Civil War," Guyton directs readers to the regionally correct phrase, "War Between the States."

land and destroying indigenous peoples and enslaving Africans to work that land.

To teach this relationship, textbooks would have to show students the dynamic interplay between slavery as a socioeconomic system and racism as an idea system. (p. 143)

Guyton's text implies that Whites always had wealth and that it was not built off the labor of Blacks. It fundamentally fails to properly address slavery much less racism.

The comparison book, Fants' (1924) *History of Mississippi*, approaches race in a much different way, which is surprising as it predates Guyton's book. Rather than avoiding the subject of race as Guyton seems to do, the Fants write extensively on Black life in Mississippi including discussions of slave trading practices. The Fants' (1924) book is more detailed overall but considerable attention is given to slaves in particular. Like Guyton's own, the Fants' book includes one visual depiction of slave labor, which is of slaves working in a field.

The ninth chapter of *Our Mississippi* deals with the onset of the "War Between the States." It begins immediately defending the Southern states' right to secede. The text states,

Ever since the formation of the United States government, there had been people who believed that a state had the right to leave the Union if it wished. These people believed that since no states had been forced to join, but had done so of their own free will, they should be able to withdraw, or *secede*. (Guyton, 1952, p. 171, original emphasis)

Guyton almost seems to shout for Mississippi to secede. She writes, “the people in the South felt that they were about to be robbed of their slaves and cheated of the liberty, or their rights as states” (p. 152).

Next the textbook states that the decision to secede “was followed by a prayer, and then a new state flag, blue with a white star in the center, was unfurled, as the audience rose in salute” (Guyton, 1952, pp. 173-174). Again this follows the line of thinking that states that God was on the South’s side. It creates a noble portrait of the region as doing what was just and fair. Fants’ (1924) text also portrays the South as the noble player in the “War Between the States.”

Also, this chapter is the introduction to Jefferson Davis, the only president of the Confederacy. While Davis should no doubt be mentioned in the text, it presents him in a heroic manner stating that it “was a great honor to Mississippi” to have him as their long time resident. The text goes on for three pages discussing his life. Loewen (2003) warns us about the heroification of figures. He says that it distorts the lives of individuals to the point that we “cannot think straight about them” (p. 12). To overlook the inner struggles is to reduce the man or woman to “melodramatic stick figures” (p. 29).

Perhaps one reason the author may have painted Davis as “Mississippi’s great soldier-statesman” is to remove ambiguity and maintain control over disharmony due to slavery and the fear of racial dissonance (Guyton, 1952, p. 30). Loewen (2003) writes “A certain etiquette coerces us all into speaking in respectful tones about the past” (p. 28). Still, we must consider how Guyton represents the past officials and watch for biases that may surface.

The text goes on to describe the battles of the “War Between the States.” Guyton talks about the bravery of the Confederate soldiers throughout. But most interesting is the suggested readings for these sections. Among them are Margaret Mitchell’s (2007/1936) book *Gone with the Wind* and Stark Young’s (2004/1934) *So Red a Rose* (Guyton, 1952, p. 204). These texts are steeped in the “stars and bars” tradition that depicts slaves as loving followers of their masters. Beck and Clowers (1975) write, “More Americans have learned the story of the South during the years of the Civil War and Reconstruction from Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* than from all of the learned volumes on this period” (p. ix). Interestingly, the Guyton presents neither the Northern perspective nor the side of Blacks in the South.

Reconstruction is also addressed in a most interesting manner. Guyton (1952) suggests that Blacks “had no idea of the responsibilities [of being free], and few of them knew anything about making a living for themselves” (p. 208). Just as egregious are the sentences that follow:

For their own good, however, the Negroes were restricted in a number of ways by the terms of the Black Code. The legislators realized that the freed Negroes would not work unless they were made to, and that, if they did not work, they would starve....laws were intended to make the Negroes work for a living instead of being supported by the government which had just freed them. It was felt that regular work by the Negroes would keep down crime (pp. 208-209)

The text assumes Blacks did not know how to work despite the heavy labor they put in on plantations during the years of slavery. What’s more, it presumes that they would not work without being forced. The justification for these harsh laws is that “Most

Northerners knew little about the Negroes and thought that once the black men were freed, they would be able to take care of themselves just as [W]hite men did” (p. 209). This shows the discrepancy between the North and South, favoring the Southern perspective.

The text distinguishes between the Southern plan for Reconstruction and the Northern plan. The Southern plan for Reconstruction denied that the Mississippi had to ratify the 13th Amendment because the state had no intention of reinstating slavery (Guyton, 1952, p. 209). The Mississippi plan was upset by the Northern plan for Reconstruction however. Mississippi was forced to ratify the 13th Amendment. Still Guyton says the North’s plan “had impractical notions and dreams of what should be done for Negroes” (p. 211). Furthermore the text claims that the Northern plan for Reconstruction “tried to convince the Negroes that all [S]outhern [W]hite men were their enemies and only the northerners were their friends” (p. 211). The egregious tone seems to begin here but continues in the next pages.

The text argues that the forced Reconstruction was devastating to the South because “many of the most intelligent citizens were denied any part in the reconstruction program because they had been leaders in the Confederate cause” (Guyton, 1952, p. 216). It continues “We have seen the results of the tremendous Negro majority among the voters. These things were bad, for they took the power from able men and put it in the hands of those who were incompetent and uneducated” (pp. 216-217).

Next the text berates Northerners who came South calling them “carpetbaggers and scalawags” with “unscrupulous” purposes, “in the hopes of gaining power and

wealth” (Guyton, 1952, p. 217). These individuals, the text says, “were able to gain much power by influencing the ignorant Negro vote” (p. 218). Putting down Northerners and Blacks all at once, the text supports a return to the old (White) power system.

Surprisingly, or maybe not so, the text talks about the Ku Klux Klan. The way Guyton writes is not unpredictable though. She says,

The purpose of the Klan was the protection of the weak, innocent, and defenseless people especially the widows and orphans of the Confederate soldiers. Besides this worthy aim, the Klan had another purpose—that of restoring the political power in the South to the educated and responsible [W]hite men who formerly had held it. (Guyton, 1952, p. 219)

Nothing is said about how the Klan terrorized Blacks, Jews and other immigrants throughout the South. Guyton’s text is mute on the subject. The Fants’ book (1924) also talks about the Ku Klux Klan briefly, stating, “But the pity of it was that anybody could copy the idea, and murders and other outrageous acts were done by desperate people of one kind or another under the cover of the Ku Klux disguise” (p. 219).

Was the Klan what Guyton depicted as in Natchez during this time period? Jan Hillegas, an independent researcher who the Mississippi Department of Archives and History references has found a total of 34 lynchings occurring between 1818 and 1934 in Adams county. Two of the lynchings occurred in same year that the text was published in 1934. The Klan remained active in Addams County into, and especially, in the 1960s, when a series of bombs were set off and one man killed in the Black community. Eventually, several Klan members were arrested and tried.¹³

¹³ Nelson, S. (2008). Explosive and weapons: KKK attacks from Concordia to McComb, 1964-1967. *The Concordia Sentinel*. Jan. 21, 2009.

In Guyton's text, the results of the Klan's actions are celebrated in the summary section saying proudly that the Ku Klux Klan

was able to terrify the Negroes, carpetbaggers, and scalawags so that they dared not use their powers, and finally it was successful in restoring the power of the government to the southern white men. By 1875, the white men of the South were once more in control of the state government. (Guyton, 1952, p. 224)

This return of power is where the history meets the present in the text. Whites were back in power, and the Civil Rights Movement was still to come.

Race and privilege are always entwined, as whiteness contains its own privilege. This is in part why reading class in this textbook is difficult: class privilege is so well hidden amongst issues of race. For an overt example of classism, one must know a bit about The Club and its work in Natchez to see how the women have a vested interest in promoting an elitist atmosphere throughout the text. As shown in Chapter Two of this dissertation, The Club is responsible for bringing Natchez into its current state as a tourist town. Since the 1930s, the town has depended on that income to support it. At any given time there are up to 23 plantation homes open to tourists who can come through and visit. This source of income in the 1930s brought in considerable amounts of money, as it does today.

This fact is interesting because of the way the textbook presents Natchez through pictures. Contrasting the single picture of the slaves, there are 12 plantation homes pictured throughout the book. This sharp distinction stages the South as a land of wealth and prosperity without giving a single sentence stating that that wealth was

built on slave labor. In contrast, Fants' (1924) book contains only one picture of a plantation home.

Gender is particularly relevant in reading of the text because the book was written by a woman, Pearl Guyton, member of The Club. It is unusual that a woman would be the author of the state sanctioned textbook because women still played a subservient role in the 1930s. Guyton was breaking ground and leading the way for women's voice to enter as an official in the public schools. Other textbooks that I have found from this time period were almost exclusively written by men; at the very least they were always co-authored, usually by a husband as is the case for the Fants' (1924) textbook *History of Mississippi*.

Besides this significant factor, early on in the text itself, during the discussion of the colonial days of Mississippi, Guyton gives considerable attention to the arrival of the French ship, the *Pelican*. On it were four Sisters of Charity and twenty-three women. The text states, "Today, many families of Southern Mississippi proudly trace their ancestry to these *Pelican* colonists" (Guyton, 1952, p. 38). While this is the first mention of women in the text, it presents them in an attractive manner, not mentioning that they were not likely women of wealth or high upstanding character. This is an example of what would become republican motherhood. After the American Revolution, the country experienced a reorientation of thinking about the place of women in society. Up until that time, women were expected to manage their homes and take a subservient role to the male head of household. During the war, however, women were forced to support embargoes against foreign imports by producing their own home goods such as cloth. Their lives became more obviously entwined with the political realm. These

contributions were not only made to their household but to the nation. The result was a new sense of self-worth and national importance. Therefore Republican Motherhood meant a new and important role for women especially as it pertained to education and civic duties. The idea that the women of the *Pelican* were the ancestors of many proud and prominent Mississippi families foreshadowed women's special place in society.

Furthermore, the fact that Mississippi was referred to as "she" early on in the textbook, speaks to the role of womanhood in the South: it is something to be coveted, cherished, and honored just as a mother or any virtuous women would. The state seems to say that it deserves to be put on a pedestal if you will.

The text does however mention that Mississippi was one of the first states to recognize equal property rights for married women (Guyton, 1952, p. 157). This inclusion of women's growing rights is important and reflects the author's interest in women's history. Not noted, however, is the fact that Black women and men did not share those same rights. This intimates the author and The Club as central figures of the text: White, wealthy Southern women.

The second half of the text tells of civic and social programs in the state. Two parts that stand out are the sections on the growth of home demonstration work and education, particularly women's education. In the first section Guyton discusses women and their work. To properly explain the role of women's education that occurred in home demonstration programs, I must first discuss the idea of domestic feminism as a route which allowed women to slowly enter their voices into the public realm.

Domestic feminism argues that if women were at least equals to men in the home, then their abilities as homemakers were also needed in public life. Women's

argument that mothering should extend outside the home took different routes. Some women formed benevolent societies or missionary programs. Still others such as the women featured in *Our Mississippi* developed home demonstration programs. These programs were a part of the 4-H club movement that sought to help families gain skills needed to be active forces in their community and to develop ideas for a more innovative economy (Waguespack, 1988). The first of these programs was called Tomato Clubs. These were popular in Natchez and were developed to help families grow their own produce which they could then sell. The home demonstration program began with instructions on “canning, gardening, and food preparations” but it gradually expanded to include “sewing, remodeling of clothes, weaving, home beautification, kitchen improvement, furniture renovations and all the skills related to the management of food, clothing and shelter” (Guyton, 1952, p. 358). While these are typically thought of as domestic chores, the home demonstrations educated women on ways that they could earn a living, slowly making their way into the public sphere.

The text talks specifically about Black women using their domestic powers to make positive changes. It says that

In Mississippi, Negro home demonstration agents go among their own people working with women and girls in small groups, with families at home, and through rural schools and churches. Wherever they can they teach lessons of thrift, industry, cleanliness and honesty. (p. 361)

Though the assumption is that Blacks are unclean and dishonest, the home demonstration clubs gives agency to Black women in particular.

While the textbook outlines the importance of education, it makes no comment on the segregation of schools. Instead it only states that Mississippi “tries to meet, as best she can the educational needs of particular groups” (Guyton, 1952, p. 292). It does however talk about women’s education and the various women’s colleges in the state. The text states that in 1801 “the Reverend David Ker had established in Natchez a private school for girls” (p. 286). Along with other colleges for men, there are colleges for women noted such as Mississippi State College, Blue Mountain College and Grenada College, all for women.

In comparison with the Fants’ (1924) book, Guyton’s text had much less detail. When looking at race, class and gender, Guyton seems to amplify what the Fants’ text said.

Katherine Miller, *Natchez of Long Ago and the Pilgrimage*

In addition to Guyton, other club members also wrote texts on Natchez’s history. The Club’s 1932 president, Katherine Miller (1938), wrote a book entitled *Natchez of Long Ago and the Pilgrimage* distributed in gift shops around the town. Composed of many pictures and brief commentaries, the text conveys Miller’s views of the specific social meanings and purposes that came from The Club’s work. Images within the work present a tender vision of Southern life with exquisitely dressed women, aristocratic men, and 37 majestic mansions. The portrayal of Southern life and living is one of gentility, nobility, wealth, and entitlement. Miller’s book can be seen as a representation of the Lost Cause movement, which sought to bring White society in the South to the defense of the cause of the Confederate States of America, clearly. Like The Club, those who contributed to this movement portray the Confederacy’s cause as noble and

the Confederacy's leadership as representative of old-fashioned chivalry and benevolence.

The book begins by beckoning readers to go back in history to a time when the South was wealthy and prosperous. Miller (1938) states,

Turning back the pages of the years, we discover Natchez—old, mellow and historic. Perusing her story, we go beyond the days of the War Between the States to the days when pioneer families came to this frontier town of the Old Southwest, gleaned great wealth from virgin lands, wealth they lavished upon their homes. (p. 5)

This focus on the homes continues throughout the book and suggests that they were symbols of the South's wealth.

The text then explains the history of Natchez under “five flags,” Native American, French, Spanish, American and The Confederacy (Miller, 1938, p. 5). Miller does not say much about the Indians aside from their tendency towards warfare. Under the French, Miller writes, the region was first known as Fort Rosalie, but soon became known as Natchez, named after the Natchez Indians who lived in the area. The book tells of the 1729 massacre in which French soldiers were attacked and killed by the Natchez Indian tribe.

The book continues: In 1779, the Spanish took possession of Natchez. Under Spanish rule, settlers built a church at the center of the town. The town then developed a grid of city streets radiating outward. Besides the space set aside for Spanish troops, the settlement was dominated by settlers who came to seek their fortune in this land of wealth.

Finally, possession “fell into the hands of the United States government” (Miller, 1938, p. 12). And in 1798, Mississippi was made into a territory with Natchez as its capital. The book mentions that the printing press made it possible for one of the first newspapers in the Southwest to be published, though the name of that paper is not given. The text notes that “the soil of the country contiguous to the city was of an extremely fertile character and cultivation of cotton by slave labor was exceedingly profitable” (p. 13). This is the first time slavery is mentioned in the book.

Also mentioned were the innovations that occurred in the South. The book makes note of not only the printing press but also the cotton compress and the railroad, all of which were new to the Mississippi territory. These innovations were partly to blame for the bust that soon occurred, as the region was suffering from inflation. Adding to the depression, the book notes that in 1840 Natchez was visited by a tornado that left much of the area devastated. After all of this tragedy, Natchez no longer held its place as the leading city in the territory so “it lost much of its prestige and the war coming on gave a final blow to its old-time prosperity” (Miller, 1938, p. 17).

Miller touches briefly on the Civil War, stating,

When the war was closed it was for a while thought the city never could recover from the ruin which had been brought upon the people of Natchez and its vicinity.

The wealth of the planters was gone, and those who had lived a life of luxury and elegance found themselves reduced to poverty. (p. 17)

But the town rallied and survived. Miller writes, “Quietly and peacefully the control of public affairs was regained, and the class of population from whom danger was feared acquiesced in the action of our prudent citizens with apparent pleasure” (p. 18).

Miller goes on to state, “The war which had spread ruin and desolation over the land, had left to Natchez a class of earnest, enterprising young men who went to work vigorously to recoup their fortunes” (Miller, 1938, pp. 17-18). She continues,

As the South has been rehabilitated under the changed condition of our labor system, so Natchez, too, has put on a new phase, and one which promises to make of it a more prosperous and important city than it ever has been before. (p. 18)

Miller continues this hope when she discusses the town’s return to enterprise with the building of

two large cotton mills, two mills for the manufacture of cotton-seed oil, two iron foundries, a cotton compress, an elevator from the river to the top of the high bluff on which the city stands, a street railway, and a large number of minor manufacturing establishments. (Miller, 1938, pp. 18-19)

She concludes the history of the town, stating,

These all indicate a future for Natchez that will be brilliant and useful. Its beautiful location, its delightful climate, its phenomenal healthfulness, the fertility of the country which surrounds it, the generous and hospitality of its people, all point to Natchez and its vicinity at the present time, as it did in years long ago—the garden of the South. (p. 20)

After the history of Natchez, Miller sets out to write a history of The Club. She begins this by giving an account of her heritage. She goes back to her great-great-grandfather who came to Natchez in 1761. This account suggests that family

pedigree matters in Natchez. Tracing one's lineage gives one credit as an insider or local.

Additionally Miller tells how she was elected president of the Club in 1931. She states "This proved to be an adventure for me, because I had never belonged to an organization, civic or otherwise" (Miller, 1938, p. 24). Despite being new to the club circuit, Miller proved that she was serious about her new position. She started her term as president by hosting the State Garden Club Federation. Even when the frost killed all the plants, Miller quickly regrouped and had the Federation members tour the town's homes instead of their gardens. Feeding of the success of the home tours, Miller campaigned to make it an annual event.

In her welcome address of the Pilgrimages first year Miller (1938) writes,
I asked our guests to take themselves back in imagination one hundred years
and visualize the grandeur of a bygone era as they looked at our houses on tour;
I asked them to dream with us dreams of a future Natchez restored to its former
glory. (p. 29)

In fact the Club women were dreaming. They were dreaming of a past that never was. The picture they recreated was not accurate. Instead, it was polished to look pristine, as if there were never any moral questions over their privilege.

Miller writes that there were doubts that The Club could pull off such an elaborate event year after year while the country was in the middle of a depression. But this doubt did little to slow The Club down. They just doubled their efforts, agreeing to even dress up as belles in hoop skirts. In addition to costumes, The Club put on a one-time

parade through the center of town. Different merchants sponsored floats and a day king and queen reigned over the events.

In the end, Miller gives credit to the women of The Club for the Pilgrimages' great success. She offers hope that the events "opened the heart of old Natchez, giving visitors a fleeting glimpse of the everlasting charm of her old mansions and recreating the days when Natchez wore its diadem" (Miller, 1938, p. 64)

It is important to note that in this particular text there is only one picture that represents Black life at a time when Black bodies were very present in the life of the South. This single image offers a depiction of house servants and barefooted "piccaninny," a term used to refer to Black children (Miller, 1938, p. 37). The striking contrast between the overwhelming number of White faces represented and the scarcity of Black bodies reinforces (in a concrete way) a privilege based not only on class, but also race.

As many scholars explain, it is essential in all work to call attention to the "invisible" positioning of Whites and whiteness above other races and postulate the potential impact of this privileging on both non-Whites and Whites (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; McIntosh, 1990; McIntyre, 1997). And while many rightly argue that race and class cannot ever be held independent of one another, this chapter foregrounds the construct of class and deals with race as secondary.

By leaving out the entire story, images, and text, of the history and presence of Black bodies in the South, The Club reifies its own Whiteness and privilege, leaving the reader of the text to see only the pageantry and polished activity of the South. While first published in 1938, this text and the images therein suggest that there were (and

one could argue remain) perceived and real material differences between people that prevented any significant interaction or mobility among classes or races.

Ultimately, Miller's work as the founder and force behind The Club's Pilgrimage helped to challenge the community's perception that women's place was strictly in the home and encouraged their work as advocates and visible social workers. The editor of the *Natchez Democrat* wrote of the club women's newly realized abilities, acknowledging that by virtue of their "intelligence, enthusiasm, culture and appreciative viewpoint," the women of the Natchez Garden Club had done the town "a great community service" (Cooper, 2006). The club women "enlarged their circle of influence outside the family, developed and applied organizing and business skills, and in some instances expanded their political activities, especially on issues dealing with tourism or the community's appearance" (Davis, 2001, p. 74).

This duality – on one hand, an act of community service, and on the other, an act of reifying social privilege, racial division, and class structure – supports Ostrander's (1984) assertion that "upper class woman's roles function well in not only achieving influence and benefits for herself and her class, but also in preventing moves toward a society that would take away some of her elite influence and benefits" (p. 23).

The Club portrayed a world that was warm and welcoming, a picture of hospitality to all groups of people. Yet, while it is certainly true that visitors to the Pilgrimage could observe and participate in the pageantry, participation in The Club's most private activities was limited to only those within the circle of privilege.

What remains, even today, is a group of elite, Southern women who project (and protect) an idealized image of a Southern belle – a dutiful servant to the cause(s) of the

Old South with its Lost Cause mentality, yet intuitive and cunning enough to raise money and wield political power. In order to maintain its power, however, The Club has to constantly restructure itself by calling on younger generations to fill as members move on. In yet another strategic move, the club women turned to young women, training them in and through the language of pageantry. It is here that the critical connection between education and the role of women in the reproduction of elite status becomes transparent; in the social literacies of the Southern belle.

Nola Nance Oliver and *Natchez*

Finally, in addition to Guyton and Miller's works, there is Nola Nance Oliver's (1940) book, *Natchez: Symbol of the Old South*. Oliver was an active club member who edited the club periodical (see Chapter 4). In addition, she wrote extensively on Natchez's history. In her book, *Natchez*, she outlines the city by telling the stories of some 53 mansions in the town. The book features pictures of the homes both inside and out. In defining Natchez by these homes, she privileges White wealth there. Like both Guyton and Miller, Oliver conveys the sense that Natchez had a manifest destiny. Oliver writes, "The hand of destiny seems indeed to uphold and enshrine this hallowed region" (p. 3). The idea that Oliver conveys is that God ordained Natchez as special and with a deliberate cause to hold on to the old ways of the past.

The homes featured in the book are all former plantation homes. Oliver displays their wealth by giving detailed descriptions of the homes. For example, when she talks about Airlie she notes,

The present Merrill family are proud possessors of hundreds of pieces of Du Barry and other imported china from France and Belgium, as well as silver

service of rare design and sacred antiquity which might well excite the envy of Royalty itself. (p. 9)

Another home called Homewood is described as follows:

One million home-burned brick were used in the main structure. Copper pipes laid in cement supplied the huge cisterns throughout the years with cold drinking water. This construction represented the work of hundreds of slaves. All locks, hinges, and door knobs were of silver. The fluted Ionic columns and grill work were imported from Spain. (p. 54)

Arlington, the book notes, “holds some five thousand books” (p. 13). The book goes on with these elaborate descriptions for 101 pages. It conveys Natchez as one of America’s wealthiest cities in its past.

In addition to the homes themselves, the gardens were mentioned as important trimmings of the homes. Elms home is described as having “the famous gardens in the rear...Winding walks lead along flower beds of old-fashioned petunias, brilliant verbenas, phlox, roses and azaleas, edged with prim cut boxwood, while giant yucca stand stiff as formal guards with white plumed headdress” (Oliver, 1940, p. 41). The gardens serve as a living memorial to the Old South and make sacred the grounds of Natchez.

The book offers few comments on race except to note the custom of “Penny Day” (Oliver, 1940, p. 4). Penny Day was when the wealthy would donate pennies to stores in town to provide for poor Blacks in the town. In contrast to the 53 homes featured in the book, there is one depiction of a Black man who was a regular customer on Penny Day.

Conclusion

Club women, particularly White club women, played an indispensable role in the creation and dissemination of the ideals of the Lost Cause. They became the custodians and guardians of civic ideas, instructing children, husbands and fathers on their patriotic obligations and moral responsibilities to the Old South. Frequently, these women advocated the cultural value system based on the hierarchies of class and race.

In his study of pro-Confederate history books, Fred A. Bailey (1991) concludes that those texts were part of “an intellectual quest designed to confirm the Southern aristocracy’s continuing legitimate authority as the dominant force in the region’s political, social and economic life” (p. 509). Bailey also believes that the Lost Cause’s view of Southern history emphasize three basic themes.

The first characteristic that Bailey points out is that in Southern textbooks, the South is portrayed as noble and paternalistic. These paternalistic beliefs shape ideals about gender and race. The paternalism of the South suggests that White men were the benevolent heads of society who ruled over women and Blacks. The books discussed in this chapter do not seem to outright challenge White men’s authority. Subversively, however, and in masked ways, women were subtly refiguring male authority by writing history as they saw it or wished to see it. They established what would constitute views of the Old South, molding the culture to fit their personal/club agenda. In Natchez, White women, not men, became the authors of history.

The second characteristic that Bailey discusses states that Confederate soldiers were praised for defending Southern homes, family and womanhood against Northern invaders. The authors of these three texts attempt to recreate this prewar state where

White males acted as assurance that the social hierarchy was in place. There was a comfort knowing people were as they always had been and that White women's achieved power was not being challenged. Instead they were put on pedestals and celebrated. White men were portrayed as saviors to this way of life that honored White women. This defense of Confederate soldiers is evident in Guyton's (1952) high praise for Jefferson Davis as "Mississippi's great soldier-statesman" (p. 30).

Finally, the third characteristic that Bailey points out is that textbooks portrayed the Reconstruction years as an oppressive period of Black rule, political corruption and Yankee vindictiveness. For example, Guyton represents Northerners as scallywags and carpetbaggers, slang and derogatory terms for Northerners who came south after the Civil War. To rectify the subjugation by the North, Guyton (1952) offers a description of the Klu Klux Klan as defenders of "the weak, innocent, and defenseless [White] people" (p. 219).

In addition to establishing the gender and racial hierarchy, a class hierarchy was also important in setting up the social order of the Lost Cause. This area is understudied but just as important as, and critical to understanding, race and gender because they are all interrelated. Many elites in the South practice paternalism. They feel that they have been given much and that they are therefore responsible for others who are not as fortunate as they, namely women and Blacks as voiced by club woman Sarah Hankens. Class, like race and gender, puts wealthy, White men at the head of the social hierarchy. Throughout the texts by Guyton, Miller and Oliver, elitism is emphasized. Whether it is depictions of grand homes or the fine china that families

own, wealth is highlighted. The women who wrote these books seemed to feel the need to use class as another marked feature of distinction, like race and gender.

In Guyton's, Miller's and Oliver's texts, it is important to recognize the relationship that exists between the Lost Cause and the South's continuing struggle with cultural value systems based on class, gender and racial hegemony. Their work to establish the social hierarchy is done to maintain their way of life prior to the Civil War. It is how they made sense of their world in the tumultuous days of the New South.

CHAPTER 4:

LADIES AND LETTERS

Becoming the woman you are is a difficult project for which the magazine has characteristically provided recipes, patterns, narratives and models of the self.

Margaret Beetham (1996, p. 1)

On one of my trips to Natchez I arranged to spend time at the local library, Judge George W. Armstrong Library. While going through the vertical files, I found three large folders on The Natchez Garden Club. They contained the periodical entitled *Over the Garden Wall*, which was published between 1947 and 1957. Folded cardstock stapled in the middle, the issues were always 20 pages long with their nondescript font and were devoid of any pictures except the front cover. The picture on the front is very telling of what the periodical's purpose is. Two well-dressed Southern belles are talking at a garden gate. One stands inside the garden while the other stands on the street. The image suggests an interesting statement about the boundaries that exist between private and public spaces. The women are standing on the edge of each space and are not entirely engulfed by the private realm nor are they completely at rest in the public sphere. Instead, the two banter back and forth between the two realms, showing the conflicting roles club women play in society in the Old South. They straddle the domestic world with the public world, not completely standing in either. It supports the

stereotype that they were gossiping but as the periodical suggests, they were engaged in more nuanced activities with social implications.



Figure 4.1: Over the Garden Wall.
from the vertical files under The Natchez Garden Club
at Judge George W. Armstong Library in Natchez, Mississippi

Furthermore in the lower right-hand corner of the picture, there is written that the periodical was the “official publication” of the Natchez Garden Club. The need to make the periodical official suggests an institutionalization of The Club. As I will show, the periodical strengthened women’s position within the community, but it also strengthened The Club against outside influences by creating a closed community of women engaged in an internal dialogue about how Southern women should act. The text-bound meaning of the periodical transfers to the ways women function in the community,

always in their place yet circumventing that submissive role through their leadership in the home and in The Club.

The Club's actions as literacy sponsors carry weight as cultural purveyors whose domestic actions suggest that they are keeping to traditional roles of womanhood. Through the periodical, they are contributing to a community of thought that is constantly negotiating gender, class and race. Brandt (2001b) writes of literacy sponsors, "these roles, deeply sanctioned within the history of women's literacy...become grounds for covert, innovative appropriation even as they reinforce traditional female identities" (p. 570). The periodical succeeds in giving women a space to voice their interests and concerns. Still it is a gendered picture of wealth and privilege. The nuances of the periodical show, however, just how complicated the club women's reality was. Often unsure in the quickly changing political and social climate of their day, the women lead complicated lives trying to reconcile their views on race and women's issues with their status and place in society. Brandt says,

So literacy appropriation draws upon, perhaps even depends upon, conservative forces in the history of literacy sponsorship that are always hovering at the scene of acts of learning. This history serves as both a sanctioning force and a reserve of ideological and material support. (p. 570-571)

The Club uses the periodical as the literacy tool that conveys the ideas of the Lost Cause Movement, in which White women had their place just beneath their White male counterparts. There are moments where the women display some principles of domestic feminism but they are always tempered by Southern patriarchy and the Lost Cause mentality. The periodical asserts the club woman's position by putting women

on pedestals as wealthy elites. That wealth allows them to enact a certain degree of superiority. As a consequence the periodical is progressive and regressive all at once.

In this chapter, I will undertake a detailed reading of the available issues of *Over the Garden Wall* and consider the ways they functioned as a form of literacy sponsorship. Before analyzing the text, I will contextualize the role of women's magazines in the 1940s and 50s. Then I will also consider how the periodical served as a space where domestic feminism flourished. Finally I will discuss how I analyzed the periodical and share what emerged during my readings of the texts.

Contextualizing the Women's Magazine Movement

Women's magazines have a long history that goes back to before the 1800s. But perhaps the peak of this literary movement could be dated to the early 1950s (Zuckerman, 1998). Television sets were not a common fixture in homes until the late 1950s, and even then programming was limited. Magazines therefore assumed a more important place in society than they do today in shaping and reflecting the values, beliefs and aspirations of American families. In particular, magazines designed primarily for women readers had a large circulation—especially through subscriptions (Walker, 1998). These magazines addressed so many facets of women's lives that it makes them an important source of information about the cultural history of the twentieth century.

Frequently publishers targeted a White, middle to upper class female population.¹⁴ Ironically, it was this gendered space that led readers to feel as though

¹⁴ Many Black women's magazines existed at this time but the widest circulation assumed a White population. See *Ladies' Pages: African American Women's Magazines and the Culture That Made Them* by Noliwe M. Rooks (2004).

magazines were a safe space through which they could read ideas and beliefs about women's changing roles. The more general public however may have dismissed the texts simply because they were periodicals for women.

The Periodical as a Gendered Form

In periodicals the future is indefinite and truth is contingent because there is no final product. There is always another issue that will have the potential to alter meanings and there is always an unwritten future that could change meaning. This affects the periodicals' material form as well as their meaning (Beetham, 1996). Most periodicals are physically more easily destroyed than books, as they are produced on cheap paper without binding. In addition to its indefinite nature, another reason for periodicals' low status is the convention of anonymous or pseudonymous journalism. This tradition only began to give way in the late 1800s, making it difficult to discover the identity or even gender of different writers and editors. In fact, the genres refused a single author status opting instead for multiple authors. Beyond that, the text often varies from narratives to poems to jokes even, leaving a fractured text rather than a rigidly coherent form. In this respect one might argue that the periodical is inherently subversive or even inherently feminine.

Julia Kristeva (1986) distinguishes between 'men's time,' which is linear, and 'woman time,' which is less bound by the clock or calendar and more attuned to the body's response to the natural environment. Mattelart (1986) uses the idea that women's perception of time is cyclical to argue that periodical forms, like soap operas, fit better with women's experiences than men's. This means periodicals are of particular importance to women, even though they are not valued highly by the dominant male

culture (Beetham, 1996). Moreover, their resistance to closure corresponds to the views that the feminine is more open than the masculine, and periodicals are by their very nature potentially subversive to the masculine.

Beyond the genre itself, the existence of mass circulation periodicals, designed largely for instructing women on their roles and duties, reveals fundamental differences between attitudes toward female and male gender roles. Ferguson (1983) points out in *Forever Feminine*, a study of British and American women's magazines, "there is no men's periodical press in the same generic sense that there is for women" (p. 2). Instead men's magazines center on sports and hobbies and not at "the totality of his masculinity, nor his male role as such" (p. 2).

It is important to note that most women's magazines of the 1940s and 50s did not see their primary role as engaging women in debates about broad political or social issues. Instead they believed their responsibility was to support women in their roles that were distinctly female, such as being a wife and a mother. These were very different than male roles—though no less important. Most often magazines saw their readers as the housewives who were not only wives and mothers but also able intellectuals who engaged in "high" culture such as cooking, gardening and travel. Bourdieu (1979), in his book *Distinctions*, defines high arts, culture or taste as etiquette, appreciation of fine food and wine and leisure activities that support more than a function other than pleasure. The magazines did not, however, seek to radically redefine womanhood.

Domestic Feminism

In *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914*, Karen J. Blair (1980) explains, “But as active agents, nineteenth-century women utilized the domestic and moral traits attributed to the ideal lady to increase autonomy, assert sorority, win education, and seize influence beyond the home in the forbidden public sphere” (p. 4). Due to the eighteenth century Separate Spheres ideology and Cult of Domesticity, women had to be subtle in their maneuvers to work beyond the domestic, private sphere and to enter the traditionally male public sphere. One strategy used to accomplish this was what Blair calls “domestic feminism,” which she describes as “Women winning a place outside the home using domestic credentials” (p. 10).

Women’s clubs became natural extensions of the private sphere, “a realm in which proper ladies flourished,” and, as for the women, “many of them were feminist under the skin, developing a significant and popular strategy for achieving autonomy, however much they may have maintained their ideological cover” (p. 1). The Club is a perfect example of this as it was a garden club that straddled the positions of private and public spheres. The women of The Club used gardening, usually a private activity, to organize and take public action within the community, such as developing gardens as memorial sites and making dedications to the Confederacy as well as showing homes and gardens. Peterson (1995) writes that club work

can be viewed as ‘public’ as it is located outside the ‘home’ and remains preoccupied with the welfare of the general population, but it is also ‘domestic’ in that it represents an extension of the values of ‘home’ into the community; and it

is 'private' insofar as it is able to remain hidden, abstracted from the gaze of the dominant culture. (p. 16)

The Club's actions often reflect women's changing ideas about womanhood. The Club was often conflicted over where a woman should stand. On the one hand, they supported domesticity by focusing The Club's actions on gardening and housekeeping, and on the other hand, they advocated public action through conservation efforts. Ultimately, however, they used domestic feminism to become active and even dominant leaders in the community.

One way that the women shifted from private actions to more public roles was by engaging other club women in issues that were important to them. The Club's monthly periodical, *Over the Garden Wall*, became the literacy tool by which women carried forth their messages.

Method

Over the Garden Wall is an example of how literacies flowed in The Club. While The Club was a sponsor to those outside The Club through its efforts in formal education, as discussed in Chapter Three, and to the more general public, as discussed in Chapter 5, this chapter shows how The Club educated and informed its own members.

To analyze the data collected in the periodical and determine what literacies The Club was promoting, I first read all 76 issues that the Judge George W. Armstrong Library has in its archives. Following the broad reading, I targeted my search further by doing as Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005) suggest and narrowed my focus to just 18 issues, two randomly selected issues per year that the periodical was in publication with the

exception of the last two years as there were only one issue per year available at the archive. Focusing on these 18 issues I collected the titles of each article (see Appendix C). I did a more thorough second reading of the selected issues and placed the articles in a category based upon the topic of each article. The findings are shown in Figure 5.2 and discussed below. Finally, I did a third reading of the articles by categories to see what the topic of each article says about The Club's literacy sponsorship.

As I reviewed all 76 issues of the magazine I found it frustrating to have only some of the issues. It always seemed as though the issue that I wanted to read, because it was referred to in another issue, was missing. But I realize the reason some of the issues were not cataloged over the years. While some clubwomen have relinquished their carefully preserved materials to archives, others have resisted depositing them such as Sarah Hankens. Some of this resistance derives from a desire to protect treasured materials from scrutiny by a public that has a long record of representing women's clubs negatively.

Reading the Mail

In September 1947, the first issue of *Over the Garden Wall* was published. Both the cover and the title of the periodical imply that the magazine would be a way of sharing of information that would have otherwise been transmitted by individuals, one to another (polite gossip, if you will, as referenced by the cover). Each club member received a complimentary copy of the periodical as did the local library. Non-club members could purchase the periodical from local vendors for a small fee. In total there were around 150 to 200 issues printed monthly.

In 1947 The Club was at its height as tourists were flocking to the city to see how the women of The Club had recreated “the Old South.” In the show of homes and in the pageant. The Club therefore had the extra revenue necessary to create and publish the magazine which served to reinforce the unity of The Club by creating a space where the women could virtually meet and discuss matters of interest to them.

Though there is no record of how the periodical raised its money for its productions, there were many advertisements for law firms, garden supply shops and other local businesses in the periodical.

Before I analyze the texts, I must speak to the issue of authorship. This periodical, like others, was primarily anonymous. Articles are featured without authors’ names. When authors do give their names, they go by their husbands’ names, Mrs. John Metcalf.

Though little is known of the periodical’s long time editor, Nola Nance Oliver, her work lives on in the archived periodical and in three books that she wrote about the homes in Natchez and on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi.¹⁵ Two of her books were published in the early 1940s and a third book was published in 1953, establishing Oliver’s credited place as an author and reflecting her interest in writing and recording history. Mimi Miller, director of the Natchez Historical Society said of Oliver, “She wrote horrible books of happy slaves. Most of what we do here [at the Natchez Historical Society] is trying to undo the damage she did in promoting Natchez.” Miller’s statement

¹⁵Interviews with The Club’s oldest members have not yielded any remembrance of Oliver. Books published by Nola Nance Oliver: *Natchez: Symbol of the Old South* (1940); *This Too is Natchez* (1953); and *the Gulf Coast of Mississippi* (1941). The first two books offer a pictorial and written description of the plantation homes of Natchez. It tells of the families who owned the homes and their family stories. The last book is more of a tourist guide to the Gulf Coast region and does not include anything about Natchez.

reflects the complicated ways that the club women like Oliver interacted with race and just how powerful their portrayal of race relations was in shaping public perceptions of life in Natchez. This statement further reflects the fact that though many of the women of The Club have passed away and been lost to history, their mark remains. Oliver writes of the periodical,

Born of this spirit of hope and ambition, the Club is sponsoring this monthly publication, in order to bring to every member and to the public at large, news of efforts and information in the various lines in which Garden Clubs are interested. (September, 1947, p. 3)

According to this, Oliver wrote with the awareness that her words would have an impact.

To give an example of what was generally included in the periodical, I turn to a randomly selected issue. In January 1956 titles of articles included “Pretzel King Says Monk First Made Pretzel,” “Travel Back Roads for Pleasure,” “Scientists Say the World’s Weather Getting Colder,” “Largest Cave in the World Found,” and “Learn How Long Seeds Need for Germination.” These articles may seem simple enough, but they actually show club women are interested in travel and scientific exploration. The articles did sometimes turn a bit less “wholesome” according to the standards of the day. For example in January of 1950 there was an article on “The Mathematics of Poker Strategy” which seemed rather risky for conservative, suburban housewives. As one can see, there were wide ranges of interests that The Club addressed in the publication. A large portion of the periodicals was dedicated to gardening articles and recipes from club members.¹⁶ There are also little tidbits such as quotes or short poems

¹⁶ For a list of articles found in 18 issues of the periodical see Appendix C.

and interesting facts such as one line facts about the building of a new bridge sprinkled into the periodical. Most important to me, however, is when The Club veered from its regular items of gardening and cooking to commentary on the female gender, other races and class diversity, though they were not overtly phrased as such.

After reading each of the periodicals I felt as though I had a good sense of how the magazine served as a vehicle for The Club 's agenda. It was not until I performed a content analysis of the article types that it truly struck me how diverse The Club's interests were.

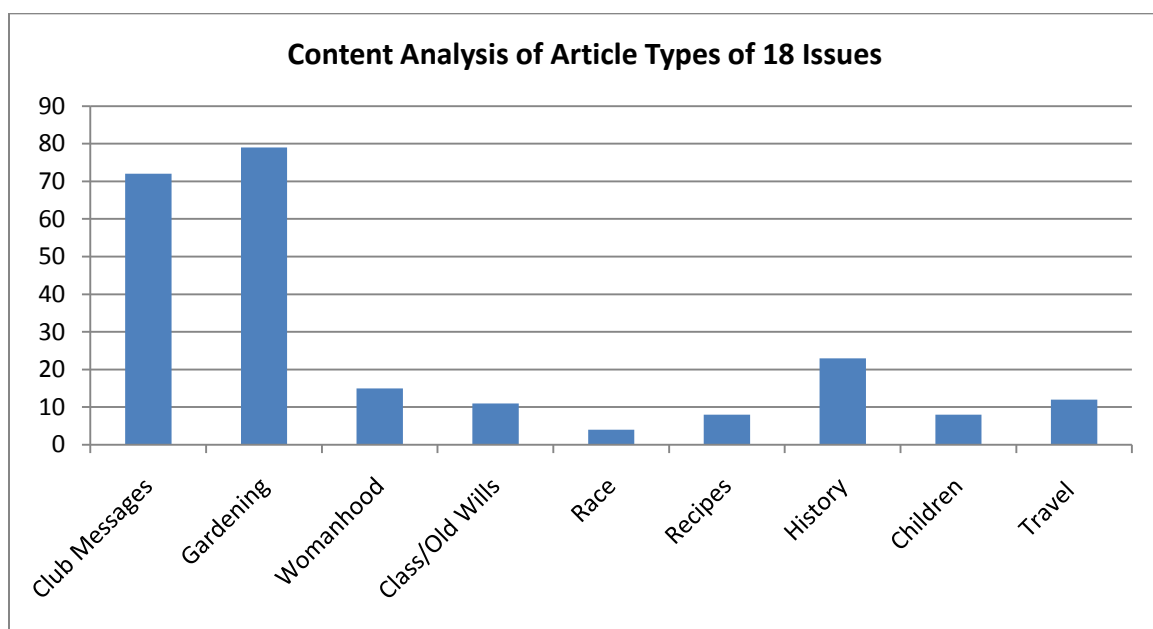


Figure 4.2 Content Analysis of Article Types of 18 Issues

A content analysis of the types of articles in the periodical revealed nine categories: club messages; gardening; womanhood; class/old wills; race; recipes; history; children; and travel. The frequency of the article types does not account for the depth each article goes into as far as depth and length. The large number of "Club

Messages” articles and “Gardening” articles does not account for the length and detail of articles in other categories such as “Old Wills” and “Famous Women.” Articles on “Club Messages” were often short reminders of important dates for club members to remember. “Old Wills” were often long articles that lasted many pages. While the analysis of the article types can be deceiving, it is clear that the periodical was primarily a garden magazine that had other interesting articles that spoke of gender, history, high arts such as gardening and cooking as well as travel and class issues.

Club Messages

Still club messages were not without their own brand of politics. The Club called on women to fulfill their role as leaders in community by stepping up to their club work eagerly. For instance, the president’s message from January 1952 reminds club women that “Pilgrimage looms just ahead, and it cannot be a success this year unless every one puts her shoulder to the wheel and gives fully of her time and talents” (p. 1). The article continues asking members to “attend your committee meetings and express your opinions.” The Club encourages women’s involvement in their increasingly public roles in the community. It often takes this spirit of action, as in September 1948 when the periodical states, “let us each and everyone bend our effort and cooperate in all ways to make the year one of the most successful the Natchez Garden Club has ever known,” so that “Natchez [may] always be proud of us” (p. 5). The club women are engaging in rhetoric that pushes them outside of their private work in the home into more public work in The Club and community.

Gardening

The periodical features gardening articles regularly. Articles such as “Time to Plant,” “Plant Bulbs Now,” and “Seed Germination” reflect the scientific interest The Club takes with gardening. They regularly feature Southern flowers such as the magnolia and the camellia, showing an interest in regionalism. Still, every now and then, an article such as “Let Us Weed Our Own Garden” will make a statement on womanhood. This article encourages women to take pride in their work by weeding their own garden rather than hiring another person to do it. While these women had the finances to pay someone to do their gardening for them, they felt it important to take on the tasks themselves. This had an obvious effect on the local economy, taking money away from local labors. Still, this reflects the independent nature of The Club women but also reflects the idea that domesticity is the proper place for a woman.

Womanhood

In the second issue of the periodical, October 1947, The Club made its first reference to the role of the female sex in an article entitled “Ten Commandments for the Modern Wife.” The commandments were listed as follows:

- I. Thou shalt have no other man but thy husband.
- II. Thou shalt confide in thy husband, even unto confessing thy sins, lest another tell the tale for thee.
- III. Thou shalt make thy house a home, and set thyself up as queen of thy husband’s throne.
- IV. Thou shalt not vex thy tired husband with idle gossip but shall give him much of thy time and patience to hear his business troubles.

- V. Thou shalt allow no lengthy telephone gossip to take thy time while thy tired husband waits for thee.
- VI. Thou shalt know and live within thy husband's income.
- VII. Thou shalt present a tidy attractive body always before the man who has selected thee as choice of his many acquaintances.
- VIII. Thou shalt improve thy [sic] mind each day and broaden with the times of thy children.
- IX. Thou shalt be an example in thy home, thy husband's companion, thy children's attentive friend.
- X. Thou shalt be ever ready that thou mayst join thy husband in pursuit of pleasure or recreation, lest failing in this, he may find companionship elsewhere. (p. 3)

This article, it would seem, sets the tone for the ensuing content of future issues as it was just the second issue. It was a perspective that assumed women were to take a subordinate role to their husbands and to be duty-bound to their children. But it was this duty to their family that also made women's roles so important and powerful, as they controlled the education of children. Later articles challenged the assumption that women played a lesser role in society.

In subsequent issues, the perspective of women's roles became much less bound by the gender expectations of the time. In November of 1948 a club member, Helen Rowland, published a poem entitled "Woman." It tells of the plight of women who are railed against by men and blamed for the downfall of mankind. In response to these attacks the speaker states,

Oh, it's woman this and woman that, and "Let's reform her quick!"

But it's "ministering angel" when man's down and out and sick.

It's woman here and woman there, "Beware the siren's snare!"

But if man gets into heaven, 'twill be woman got him there! (p. 20)

This is one of many articles that takes a different tone towards women. It dismisses many men's claims that women are the bane of men. Instead the speaker argues that women are important partners who carry the weight of the family with them. More than that, it celebrates women as the saviors of their families and puts them on pedestals just as they were prior to the Civil War, reestablishing the social hierarchy that put White women just underneath White males in the social order.

An article in the November 1950 issue took an open position towards pregnancy out of wedlock. The article, "When a Girl Makes a Mistake," states "When a girl stakes her soul on the altar of love and makes the mistake of giving her soul to the man she loves, forever has to pay and pay and pay while the man in the case goes scot free! It is not fair, but it was ever thus!" (p. 7). The article makes spiritual references, stating:

Life for men and women began the same. But man has invented for himself a better arrangement. Today when the fault is committed, woman hides herself or is driven out. Like Adam in the Garden of Eden, he says 'The woman tempted me and I did eat of the forbidden fruit.' A very convenient arrangement for men.

(p. 7)

It concludes, saying, "There is no solution to this tragedy of 'love' and life until parents evolve to the point of teaching their *daughters and sons* that 'the wages of sin is death' and that they must share equally the stain and responsibility of their intimacy"

(ibid, p. 7, emphasis added). For its time, this response was quite brave for even mentioning the subject and also outspoken for calling out men to take equal responsibility for children born out of wedlock. This challenges legitimacy laws of the day that held women responsible and prevented illegitimate children from inheriting from their father (Hartley, 1975; Teichman, 1982). Teichman (1982) argues that even up into the 1960s for a woman, having a child out of wedlock carried a social stigma. As a result, many unwed mothers were forced by social pressures to give up their children for adoption.

In addition to commentary on women's state within the family and local community, the periodical frequently offers examples of women who have made significant contributions to national life. In "Our Great Women," from September 1948, it states:

Of thirteen billion people since the dawn of recorded history only five thousand achieved greatness, and of the five thousand only two hundred were women, says Albert Edward Wiggam. Seems quite a small number, we say. But through the ages ago the glory of women was an unsung song. Modern history will give a better record since woman has come into her own. (p. 5)

And the periodical sets out to change women's place in history by making their contributions known.

Acknowledgment of women's contributions is continued as The Club takes to publishing articles about notable women, particularly articles on the suffragette and temperance leaders. For example, in October of 1948 there are articles on Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Carrie Lane Chapman Catt, and Lucretia Mott. The article on Stanton

notes that Stanton's father once said "Oh Elizabeth, I wish you were a boy" (p. 11). To which she responded "Then I will be a boy, and I will do all my brother would have done" (p. 11). It goes on to tell of how she entered an academy and in a class mainly of boys, she studied mathematics, Latin and Greek. The article outlines her courtship and marriage to Henry B. Stanton, an anti-slavery orator. It tells of her friendship with Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony. Furthermore the author summarizes her efforts to increase women's rights by stating,

The cause of woman's elevation with Mrs. Stanton was not merely a passion, but a religion. It was never her purpose to make woman less womanly but to take woman's feet out of the Chinese shoes of dwarfing custom, to restore her to liberty and justice. (p. 11)

The article on Carrie Lane Chapman Catt likewise outlines the early years of her life and marriages. It tells of how she became active in the women's movement and world peace movement. Specifically it highlights her role in the National American Women's Suffrage Association and then the International Woman's Suffrage Alliance which she organized. Articles on women such as these became more frequent in the later years of the periodical, suggesting greater openness to women's expanding roles.

Lucretia Mott was additionally honored in an article that paints her as the mother who led the way for followers such as Stanton. It notes that she went to Boston's public schools and "mingled with all classes without distinction as to color, race, or creed" (p. 13). Highlighted also was her role in the Woman's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls. The article ends with this statement: "Little by little the efforts of Lucretia Mott helped to

plant and zealously tend the seeds of Rights for Women which have grown into full flower of Freedom and Equality for womankind” (p. 13).

Another interesting article on a notable woman was published in the October 1952 issue of the periodical. It told of Carrie Nation and her crusade to stop drunkenness. The article says that after she lost her first husband to the bottle, she took a hatchet into saloons flinging it through the plate glass mirrors over the bars. She remarried David Nation who was a preacher. However, the article says:

Carrie felt she knew more about preaching than he did, so she chose his texts for him and often wrote his sermons. While David stood in the pulpit trying to inspire his little flock, Carrie sat in the front row and indicated when he should raise or lower his voice, when to speed up and where to gesture. When she thought he had preached long enough, she would step right out into the aisle and announce “that will be all for today, David”...Years later she divorced him, saying he was too slow for [her]. (p. 5)

The article addressed the question of whether or not she was crazy as others had alleged. It stated, “Carrie many not have been entirely sane herself. But who is?” (p. 5). Instead the article gave Nation credit for taking the weak anti-saloon movement and transforming “it into a militant giant which eventually put the 18th amendment into the Constitution” (p. 5).

Additionally The Club published articles on the First Ladies of the US. In September 1950 there were articles on Eliza McCordle Johnson, wife of Andrew Johnson; Julia Dent Grant, wife of Ulysses S. Grant; Lucy Webb Hays, wife of Rutherford B. Hayes; and Lucretia Rudolph Garfield, wife of James A. Garfield. The

articles generally give a brief biography of the woman and the First Family's life. Additional notes are made about the role that the First Lady had. For instance, it is written that Eliza McCordle Johnson "assisted him [the President] in the improvement of his reading and writing," relying on her own education as equally important as his (p. 10).

From articles such as "Famous Women" and "First Ladies of the U.S.," it is clear the periodical stood on the shoulders of all those "Republican Mothers" of earlier generations, who gained influence over citizens and who used their voices to uphold wealthy, White women's high social standing in society. The Club did not try to make a radical break in women's assumed roles in that time period, it merely expanded their roles to include more public roles. In his book, *Two Paths to Women's Equality*, Sanders (1995) states that both the maternal feminism of the temperance movement and the demands for equal rights found in the feminism of suffragists were needed to "emancipate women from the confines of their traditional roles" (p. xii). Detailed histories of women's lives, though it is noted that they are all wealthy White women, provided a backdrop against which the ups and downs of modern women's lives were sketched. Born out of this is a movement that occurs here in the periodical in the late 1940s and 1950s is the surrounding "tension between expectations that females in their role as wives and mothers will be dependent on men and the new expectations that they must be able to act as autonomous individuals" (p. 9). While they fulfill their wifely duties, they are also seeking a space where they can discuss issues of relevance to themselves.

In addition to acknowledging the early feminist movement in the periodical, *Over the Garden Wall* gave White club women space to challenge gender notions. The periodicals served more or less as a safe-space for them to express their ideas about women's roles without enacting those beliefs in a radical way. The periodical allowed The Club women to compose womanhood in a public forum that, though it was public, was also a safe-space. In *Forever Feminine* Ferguson (1983) argues:

women's magazines collectively comprise a social institution which serves to foster and maintain a *cult of femininity*. This *cult* is manifested both as a social group to which all those born female can belong, and as a set of practices and beliefs: rites and rituals, sacrifices and ceremonies, whose periodic performance reaffirms a common *femininity* and shared group membership. In promoting a *cult of femininity* these journals are not merely reflecting *the* female role in society; they are also supplying one source *of* definitions *of*, and socialization into, that role. (p. 184)

While the women of The Club do not directly challenge their roles as housewives, they do, as Ferguson suggests, supply multiple sources of the definitions of the role of woman. For instance, the same periodical may contain articles that define traditional models of womanhood, such as articles on how to prepare a proper holiday meal, in addition to articles with more progressive definitions of woman's role, such as noted important women who have made changes in society for the betterment of womankind.

Often the articles in the periodical contradict one another with regard to women's roles. In some articles they featured suffragettes upside articles such as "The Ten Commandments for a Modern Wife." In another issue, there was an article such as

“When a Girl Makes a Mistake.” Sometimes the contradictory articles occur in the same issue. The articles do tend to paint a slightly more independent view of women than the role of strictly housewife and mother because they very often have articles on famous women that depict women as heroic figures. But the periodicals are clearly progressive and regressive. It cannot be simplified to a either/or statement.

Old Wills/Class

In addition to the issue of gender, the matter of class comes up in *Over the Garden Wall* in a most peculiar way: when The Club began publishing old wills in their periodical. In November 1950, Mary McVeigh explains The Club’s reason for publishing wills. She states,

There is something fascinating about reading the last will and testament of prominent people in our own community. It is interesting to learn just how these people felt about disposing of their earthly treasures, and it is more interesting to speculate on just how lands, slaves and personal possessions of these people who passed to their reward generations ago, have been finally disposed of. (p. 6)

Also she states that it would be of interest to The Club’s members as they are direct decedents of many of these men and women who wrote the wills. It struck me while reading this that the publication of these wills serves as a perfect opportunity to display the pedigree of The Club and reinstates the social hierarchy that places wealthy Whites at the head. Both of these seem to underscore two values of The Club: high society and charity. For this reason Howard (2008) suggests there may be other reasons for publishing these wills. He writes:

Benevolent acts...have considerable ideological value not only in diverting attention away from the power of dominant groups but also convincing subordinates that they are concerned for others and are compassionate, kind and giving. Such ideological messages that place privileged groups in a positive light protect their interest and power. (p. 142)

One example I will highlight here is from the April 1950 issue that tells the will of Rosalie Quitman Duncan of Monmouth Plantation, dated 1909. Duncan starts her will off giving small tokens of appreciation away to close family members and friends. For example, she leaves her niece, Rosalis Duncan Lovell, her set of English silver tea service and her old journals written in her childhood. She leaves 200 dollars to her friend Harriet Jones. These gifts are small in comparison of what she next donates. She leaves the Daughters of the American Revolution 27,500 dollars for aid to their mountain schools¹⁷. She gives Jefferson College 55,000 dollars. The University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee receives another 55,000 dollars. The Natchez Association of Charity and the Old Ladies Home in Jackson, Mississippi each receive 27,500 dollars. To maintain the Agnes Z. Carpenter Library located at Carpenter School No. 2, she leaves the sum of 30,000 dollars. Finally she gives the city of Natchez 120,000 dollars for the use and benefit of the White public schools of the city. These are no small sums in 1909. Furthermore, Duncan's will shows the dedication to White education as she leaves a total of 232,500 dollars to educational endeavors.

¹⁷ The mountain schools refer to The Berry Schools set up by Martha Berry in Tennessee. The schools served as a cross between Sunday school and more formal education for White children who otherwise would not attend school. (Guyton, 1942).

Another will featured in September 1952 was the will of Miss Treeby V. Poole. It was unique because the will was from 1949, more recent than other wills published in the periodical. Furthermore, she was a member of The Club and the town's popular dance teacher. She died without ever marrying or having children and left small sums of 500 dollars to 1000 dollars to over 20 people including her maid, cook and gardener. Additionally she left her property, including a one seventh interest of Rokeby Plantation, to distant relatives. Poole was a working woman who never married or had children. Publishing her will indicates the Club's approval of her life choices.

Even more than the wills, there is another place where the periodical makes a clear statement on class. In March 1957, the periodical included an article entitled "Natchez Nostalgia." It tells the story of Miss Susan¹⁸ and her experiences during the Civil War. The article explains the way the Lost Cause operated in Natchez, stating:

You were born to a certain position in life and there you remained until you died. You might through marriage attain a higher level, but the whispering tittering behind the sandalwood fans never let you forget that you were not really accepted. Never let it be thought that Miss Susan was never consciously unkind; she was merely the product of a caste system to which the old South kowtowed unfailingly and unflinchingly. (p. 14)

Though the article speaks to life during the Civil War, it does so with a longing affinity towards that way of life. The article ends stating, "The sunlight of the years has softened and mellowed the picture of Natchez, but the discerning eye can still detect the pristine glory and fascination in this masterpiece of American primitive painting [that is

¹⁸ No last name is given.

the South]” (p. 14). It suggests that The Club might have consciously chosen a classist message in order to keep the social order intact.

Race

While the periodical is more vocal on issues of gender and even class issues, relatively little discussion is given to the issue of race. This does not mean that the periodical was not about race. In fact, the opposite is true. The periodical caters to a White female population. In her book, *The Social Construction of Whiteness: White Women, Race Matters*, Frankenberg (1993) writes that “White people have too often viewed themselves as nonracial or racially neutral” but “Whiteness is a location of structural advantage of race privilege” (p. 1). Whiteness refers to a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally situated and are linked to relations of dominations.

Though there were only three articles specifically about Blacks in the entire 76 issues, the words Black, Negro or slave appeared throughout the periodical regularly. Most often Blacks were referred to in the old wills as slaves that were often handed down to others in the family. “Indians” were also lumped with this group, as it referred to Indian slaves. While this is a product of the time, it still suggests that the women of The Club were aware of their family’s participation in the system of slavery. They never questioned it but instead published wills that used the ownership of slaves as a display of wealth. This all serves to further patriarchy and paternalism that reinscribes White’s power over Blacks

The first reference to Blacks outside of the old wills occurs in the very first issue in September 1947 on the editorial page. There is article about “Colored Garden Clubs.” The small commentary states,

Attention is called to the improvement in the yards and gardens of the colored population of Natchez. Inspired by the cooperation and assistance of the Garden Clubs, the more progressive colored women have organized a Garden Club of their own and they furnish seed and plants to their members and encourage in every way the beautification of their home grounds. Along Canal Street even the lowliest cabins have attractive plants and vines. These are the results of the efforts of the Colored Garden Clubs.¹⁹ (p. 5)

This article shows that it was not only the White club women were making efforts to influence the community but Black club women also.

Another more notable mention came in the September 1950 issue. The periodical featured an article, “Interesting Old Slave Sales.” This article title seems to trivialize the fact that slaves were owned and sold. Noted in a brief commentary before the actual bills of sale, it is written that the articles prove that mothers were not separated from their children during these sells. This statement suggests that the women of The Club are offering a sort of defense towards slavery as more humane than many others portray the institution, so their gender work here is at the clear expense of non-White females. This article is an example of the ways that paternalism works in

¹⁹ I have looked for records on these Colored Garden Clubs however I have been unable to find records or persons who know about them. For further study on Black women’s clubs see Giddings, P. (1994). *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement*. New York: Harper or Hendricks, W. A. (1998). *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest: Black Club Women in Illinois*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

The Club. Whites see themselves as acting as parents of Blacks, whom they viewed as childlike.

Finally in January 1951 there was an article entitled "Rural Darkies Honor Mrs. Ferriday Byrnes." The article states that Blacks in the surrounding community of Natchez came out to honor one of the White members of The Club. Though the article gives no more detail about Byrnes, it is clear that a great deal of planning went into the event. There were songs, a sermon, baptisms and a dedication ceremony described in the honor. The article states, "The negroes in the Beverly vicinity have an esteem and loyalty for their 'white folks' that can only be understood by those who know that the true Southerner always has the welfare of the darky at heart (p. 5)." This too suggests that Byrnes was acting benevolently.

Frequently the periodical featured articles on the history of various places, especially histories of the South and of Natchez. The women of The Club are always engaging in the writing of history so it is no wonder that it featured history so prominently in the periodical. In March 1958 The Club included an article entitled "Natchez of Yesteryear" (p. 14). It shows just how The Club participates in writing history by telling a version of the past that was palatable to their audience. The article is set in antebellum Natchez and tells the story of a family and their relationship to their Mammy. It says "Mammy loved her white charges with an all-consuming adoration" (p. 14). The article continues, "When Mammy passed away the family suffered an inconsolable grief. She had been born among them and died among them, so it naturally followed that she should be buried in the family cemetery on the old plantation" (pp. 14-15). Finally the article concludes saying "That plantation was paradise on earth"

(p. 15). This perspective of plantation life is clearly skewed. It paints a picture that favors White privilege and romanticizes the slave culture of the old South.

History

Much of the periodical is engaged in writing a history of the Natchez and the South. The magazine features a series of articles entitled “Natchez Nostalgia,” which convey the ideals of the Lost Cause. They usually tell fictional stories of past wealthy, White families headed by domineering former Confederate soldiers. Women are portrayed as Southern belles and Blacks are depicted as slaves. This character list seeks to recreate the social hierarchy prior to the Civil War, in which White males were paternalistic caretakers of a fast-disappearing way of life.

Another article from May 1955 entitled “Flashbacks” outlines etiquette for ladies in the Old South. It states:

Men frequently look with a jealous eye on a learned woman...be cautious, therefore, in a mixed company of showing yourself too much beyond those around you. To a mind well formed there is more real pleasure derived from the silent consciousness of superiority, than in the ostentatious display of it. (p. 4)

This article suggests a version of history that would have women act as docile creatures who fit into the patriarchy of the South. Both this article and the previously mentioned one are examples of the periodical capturing and writing history.

Recipes, Children and Travel

While it is easy to imagine that women’s magazines would focus on cooking and childcare, *Over the Garden Wall* writes relatively little on these subjects though the periodical includes many old family recipes. These recipes may convey domesticity, but

it is not necessarily an oppressive domesticity. Rather because women themselves wrote the articles it suggests they celebrate cooking as a women's commitment to the family. The family becomes the unit by which they enact their politics. For many cooking then becomes an intensely political act that acknowledges women's values, women's arts, women's politics reflecting the ideas of domestic feminism.

More than domestic feminism, Schenone's (2003) book, *A Thousand Years Over a Hot Stove: A History of American Women Told Through Food, Recipes, and Remembrance*, outlines the cooking as a potentially liberatory practice. She notes that following the American Revolution, White women won a new social status for themselves as the feeders and nurturers of the growing nation. During the Civil War, she notes that women ran farms and businesses while their husbands were fighting. "[Women] followed battalion of soldiers, ministering to and feeding the sick and wounded. They were competent, strong and highly involved" (p. 104).

Furthermore, Schenone (2003) states that women's early literacy movement was fundamentally influenced by the kitchen through cookbooks, domestic guides, women's novels and magazines. The publishing industry was taking off, and a single cookbook could have an enormous influence over thousands of women.

Schenone (2003) states that "though the cliché lives in our hearts that cookery and feminism are not natural allies, the truth is that they are estranged cousins on a distant limb of the family tree. Cookbooks gave many women their first public voice..." (p. 107).

Surprisingly, there were relatively few articles on parenting in the periodical. One exception was an article from February 1949 that was entitled "What Shall Children Do

With Their Parents?” (p. 13; p. 19). The article touts the benefits of a prudent marriage match for the benefit of the pair’s children. This message is conveyed in the following comical story:

Here we are reminded of the farmer who sat reading his paper while his wife was busy in the kitchen, and the baby in the cradle was crying; the wife called “John, see what’s the matter with the baby,” John continued reading; just then there came a loud ba-ha from the barnyard; John threw the paper to the floor, grabbed his hat, and rushed out the door in wild excitement and interest. When he returned to the house, his wife said, “John, why would you run to the calf when it cried and you wouldn’t notice the baby?” “Well,” said John, “that calf’s father is a thoroughbred.”

Moral: See that your child’s father is a “thoroughbred.” (p. 19)

As funny as this simple story is, it also carry a very important message. Women were calculating their marriage choices. The institution of marriage was something a woman was entering into by choice and as such they were being more shrewd in their selection than in previous generations. Women had options and were taking them though there were still familial and social pressures.

Another article from January 1952 entitled “A Girl Defined” discusses the pleasures and pitfalls of having a daughter. The article states, “Who else can cause you more grief, joy, irritation, satisfaction, embarrassment, and genuine delight than this combination of Eve, Salome, and Florence Nightingale?” (p. 3). The women of The Club were engaged in the paradoxes of parenting just as they were paradoxes themselves.

Throughout the periodical there are articles about other places. From North Carolina to Korea, from Mount Vernon, Virginia to McComb, Mississippi and St. Augustine, Florida, the periodical has articles on places all over the globe. The women of The Club were pushing boundaries and expanding their world but they talked most affectionately of their home in Natchez.

Conclusion

In the periodical *Over the Garden Wall*, the club women made sense of the social upheaval and the challenges to their way of life, which was based on White male protection of White female culture. If they had lost the Civil War so too had they lost some of their privileged social status afforded to them by their gender and class. To hold on to what was left of their elite status, they adopted roles as cultural keepers administering the memorial rituals and transmitting cultural values through their actions and writings. They attempted to rebuild their lives as they were prior to the war and restore the social fabric of the Old South.

For club women, their cultural power was tied up in the origins of the Lost Cause, depending on patriarchy, paternalism and privilege. While many women see patriarchy as oppressive to women, the club women challenged patriarchy by presenting women as independent groundbreakers. Still while they feature articles on feminists, they did not call for major public changes in the way women operated in Natchez society. Instead, The Club slowly and covertly expanded women's roles and influences in their places as wives, mothers and club women. They did not advocate radical feminism but rather domestic feminism which did not challenge White men's ultimate authority. Their defense for this is that maintaining the social order that patriarchy set forth

reestablished the White club women's revered place on pedestals in Southern culture. It helped them maintain their own elite status.

To defend patriarchy, they suggested that White males acted paternalistically. Paternalism argued that White males ruled benevolently over women and Blacks for the best of everyone. Central to this theme is that Blacks were kept in a subordinate position. After the Civil War, Blacks had been given their freedom. This radical shift not only changed the social landscape, it threatened the social order that gave White club women the superiority. There was a real fear that without the usual social ranks, the South would be in complete disarray. To prevent this, the club women actively engaged in supporting a system of racial segregation.

In addition to patriarchy and paternalism, the periodical also created a culture of privilege amongst the club women. Because they were wealthy, they felt the need to continue their paternalistic behavior. They published wills to show they were "doing good." So long as they could defend their work as benevolent, then it was less likely that their privilege status would be challenged or that they would feel social dissonance for positioning themselves above others.

The Club used the periodical as a literacy tool to defend their position in the social hierarchy set forth prior to the Civil War. The principles of the Lost Cause that the women enacted fortified patriarchy, paternalism and privilege, all which maintained the club women's status.

CHAPTER 5:

PILGRIMAGE, PAGEANTRY AND PEDAGOGY

Her period in the cocoon of debdom is brief, but intended to stamp her for life.

Modern girls need not model themselves on sheltered vestal virgins of a previous generation, but they need to be prepared to liftoff for their launch in society.

Catherine Clinton, 2007, p. 91

In a critical rite of passage from girlhood to womanhood designed to serve as a template for all girls of this class and social circle, the young Queen must pledge her family's values, aspirations, and pretensions, charted by men, instilled by other women. Smiling, no matter what, she must demonstrate both the ritual competence and emotional management intended to ease her transition into an elegant, courteous, and compliant upper-class wife.

John F. Kasson, 2007, p. 157

Spring 2010 and my dissertation advisor had come to town to observe The Natchez Historic Pageant with me. I was nervous because I knew they would play "Dixie" and the audience would rise to honor the Confederacy. Should I stand? What would my advisor think and do? I held my breath as the song began to play...

Brandt (2001b) makes the argument that despite being perceived as open, innovative, and charitable, "sponsors are delivery systems for the economies of literacy, the means by which these forces present themselves to—and through—individual

learners” (p. 556). Because literacy sponsors exert power over those they sponsor, how and when they use that power becomes of crucial concern. But it is often the case that “literacy takes its shape from the interests of its sponsors” (p. 558). Literacy, in this case cultural and social literacy, becomes a coveted mark of power, influence, and exclusivity. A marker of opportunities granted and opportunities denied, literacy practices trail along histories of “ascending power or waning worth, legitimacy or marginality” (Brandt, 2001a, p. 8).

I argue that The Club’s activities, with its membership of elite, Southern women, give “meaning within a class framework that they themselves construct ... and perpetuat[e] the social-organizations forms and patterns of cultural life” (Ostrander, 1984, pp. 3-4). The Club specifically engages in (re)constructing pedagogy and literacies through particular practices of Southern pageantry as a performative text and social engagement. The chapter examines the intersections of class and gender in the context of this site of privilege, as well as the ways in which learning and literacy are mobilized therein to protect and ensure that privilege.

I begin by discussing the method that led to this chapter. Next I trace the unique history of historical pageantry in the United States and the history of the Natchez Historic Pageant in particular. I then consider the social literacies of the “Southern belle,” offering a reading of the mannerisms and customs that allow these women access to privilege and power. I will explore the complex and complicated intricacies of social, political, and personal learning that are part of being affiliated with the elite group. I conclude with findings and thoughts about the importance and relevance of

exploring the education of elite groups and social organizations such as The Club especially through The Pageant and Tour of Homes.

Method

Before beginning the research for this chapter, I did extensive reading about historic pageants. Once I had a basis for understanding pageants, I located the first script of The Natchez Historic Pageant. I read it several times before observing the pageant at the Spring Pilgrimage twice in the Spring of 2010. In addition to readings of the original script and observing the pageant, I also conducted a survey at the monthly meeting of The Club to identify members that would have information from the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Once I identified possible participants, I contacted them by phone to set up interviews. I had interviews with eight individuals of either the royal court or club officers: Sarah Hankens, Thelma Tullos, Elisabeth Knight, Terry Smith, Stephanie Wall, Jennifer Wall, Holly Hunt, and James Bennett.²⁰ The first interviews were conducted in the participants' respective homes and allowed me to gather basic biographical data and establish a timeline of the participants' interactions in The Club. The second interviews were more targeted and focused on participants in the pageant and/or their position as an officer in The Club. The final interview was a follow up to the initial interviews and probed further into previous comments.

Performance

The Club's literacies include spoken word performances such as the historic pageant which are cultural transmitters of regional memory. Roach (1996) writes that frequently these performances of "selective memory requires public enactments of

²⁰ All names are pseudonyms.

forgetting, either to blur the obvious discontinuities, misalliances, and ruptures or, more desperately, to exaggerate them in order to mystify a previous Golden Age, now lapsed” (p. 3). This is true for The Natchez Historic Pageant, which celebrates the Old South as it was prior to the Civil War and attempts to recreate a past that never was.

The word performance comes from the French word *parfourni* which means “to furnish forth,” “to complete,” or “to carry out thoroughly” (Turner, 1986 , p. 13). Schechner (1985) calls performance “restored behavior” or “twice-behaved behavior” which means behavior that “is always subject to revision because it cannot happen exactly the same way twice” (pp. 36-37). Definitions of performance often assume that performance is a substitute for something preexisting. Roach (1996) writes that

Performance, in other words, stands in for an elusive entity that it is not but that it must vainly aspire both to embody and to replace. Hence flourish the abiding yet vexed affinities between performance and memory, out of which blossom the most florid nostalgias for authenticity.” (pp. 3-4)

The Club is actively creating an experience that does not necessarily represent the past historically but that is a representation that conveys the dreams of The Club.

Historic Pageantry

Historical pageantry was a unique American phenomenon that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century and which became dense with historical imagery. Many of the themes that historical pageantry expressed were like those of monuments, museums and murals that put forth public versions of history. But historical pageants were also public performances chronicling local community development. Pageantry’s story is part of the larger movement to recover American history (Glassburg, 1990).

Glassberg (1990) argues that public historical imagery is an essential element of Southern culture because it contributes to how [individuals] define [their] sense of identity. Furthermore, it locates in time and helps us as we learn about our place in a succession of past and future generations. Ultimately, historic imagery situates its audience towards future action by presenting a part of history considered to be timeless and holding enduring qualities that continue in the present. It recognizes various groups and individual histories, suggesting the relative position of groups in society that are important and relevant to the larger picture of history. More than that,

historical pageantry was used as patriotic and moral education, as popular entertainment, as civic boosterism, as a tool to reform American's use of leisure, as a means of rejuvenating rural society, as a way to revolutionize the American theater, as propaganda on behalf of a program of urban political reform as a way to mobilize society for world war, as a way to define an American folk identity, and finally as a retreat from the consequences of modern industrialism.

(Glassberg, 1990, p. 5)

Historical imagery is handed down from generation to generation, and often from an elite to the masses. One generation's understanding of history is different from the next generation's, despite the regular commemorative rituals. Images alter as they stretch to incorporate the experience of the next generation. Thus historical interpretations and understandings change with time.

But one use of history was unique to pageantry in the early twentieth century. That is it has the belief that public performance has the power to transform. This transformation does not necessarily mean future progressivism. In the case of The

Pageant, the transformation that occurs is a rewriting of history. Historical pageantry is instrumental and concerned with “antimodernism”—the desire to reject the present in favor of the past (p. 4).

Following custom, programs made historical orations the center of the performances. They invited public officials, clergymen, professors and other important figures to orate the addresses. Like sermons, programs had invocations, hymns, and benedictions. The orations explained the sacred and worldly significance of the past events displayed in the program. Programs were infused with nationalism and Christian piety. History in the programs unfolded as a sacred text chronicling the nation’s divine mission and as a handbook of moral instruction to outline how local residents should live in the present (Glassberg, 1990, p. 11).

Not only did the historical pageantry depict national events and issues, some pageants also marked local historical anniversaries, speaking to the town’s history, growth and development. Public officials used the historical pageantry as demonstrations of civic unity, and local residents saw these programs as opportunities to display their particular group identities and cultural preference (Glassberg, 1990, p. 21).

Glassberg (1990) writes, “The guardian of tradition concerned with the proper conduct of civic holiday celebrations came primarily from the ranks of the economic, educational, and hereditary elite” (p. 31). These guardians stood apart not only because of their wealth but also because of the leadership positions they assumed in local towns. “From these positions they spoke for genteel culture”; voicing a shared set of ideals, they assumed the responsibility as cultural leaders for the future (p. 31). To

these genteel sponsors, public historical pageantry offered other examples of the cultural attainments of the local communities.

The patriotic and cultivated societies sponsored new commemorative programs which “tempered the stern lessons of the past with scenes of color and romance” (Glassberg, 1990, p. 38). Figures of the national and local past were imagined to be standing over, looking as the celebrations came to life, impersonated by their descendants in glamorous costumes, balls, and tableaux. “Imaging themselves the resurgent American aristocracy,” actors preformed heroic deeds of their local and national figures. As time went on, women assumed new roles in these celebrations. Women began to manage celebrations, and with that they had the power to change public impressions of history.

Pageantry and Pride: The Historic Natchez Pageant

First, and foremost, it is important that we see The Natchez Historic Pageant [hereafter referred to as “The Pageant”] as a performative text that The Club enacts as a form of public literacy in order to see just how the club was acting as a literacy sponsor. The Club’s current President, Mrs. Elisabeth Knight, provided a general description of the Pageant²¹: “Twice a year the Natchez Garden Club sponsors the Historic Natchez Pageant which takes place during the biannual Pilgrimage. The show is held in the city auditorium where there is room to host approximately a thousand guests for each performance three nights a week for an entire month.” The Pageant depicts some of the scenes of the Old South through nine brief vignettes.

²¹ All names are pseudonyms.

As one of the more popular events of the Pilgrimage, tourists flock to see the scenes of Natchez with depictions of Southern belles in hoopskirts and young Confederate soldiers decorated in full uniform. The Pageant acts as a form of teaching – a pedagogy that seeks to (re)construct and (re)present the supposed “charming way of life” that the people of Natchez enjoyed prior to the “War Between the States” and promote it as a more sophisticated and desirable existence.

The Pageant, called the Confederate Pageant until 1995, was started in 1932. It was the center of the Pilgrimage celebration. After visitors toured the homes of Natchez’s wealthy families, they would come to the pageant in the evening. Written by a committee of club women, The Pageant as a text carries a considerable social message that ultimately reinstates women’s domestic role during The Lost Cause Era.

The tableau begins by asking visitors to step into the past with Natchez²². The opening lines set the tone for the rest of the evening’s show. The script states:

Romance, grandeur, chivalry, wealth—all these are Natchez. Adventure, action, boldness, strength—all these are Natchez. Aaron Burr, Jefferson Davis, William Dunbar, John James Audubon—all these are Natchez. (The Historic Natchez Pageant, 1932, p. 1)

From these few lines visitors can determine that tableaux will focus on the wealthier side of Natchez. And interestingly, when the script mentions famous Natchezians, they are all men. This is despite the fact that the show as a whole centers on women, especially the queen.

²² The pageant was originally written in 1932 and has remained unchanged except for the exclusion of the slaves picking cotton scene which was taken out due to social pressures during the 1950s.

Before The Pageant gets underway, the script beckons audience members to return to the antebellum days stating,

Before the War Between the States, times were different. Before the war there were rustling silks, fluttering fans and the perfume of lovely gardens. Before the war Natchez was a world unto itself. Come tonight and visit this world.

Natchez—a place to remember forever. (The Historic Natchez Pageant, 1932, p. 1)

The show depicts Natchez as the center of the South with all its wealth displayed “at house parties, at garden parties, at dances, at a prominent wedding, at the showboat on the river and before they went hunting” (The Historic Natchez Pageant, 1932, p. 1). It mentions The Civil War but refers to it in the popular Southern manner, “The War Between the States.”

After the introduction, the first tableau tells the story of the American triumph. It outlines the French occupation, by first raising the French flag and saying it was the French who “introduced African slavery to Natchez, and the region has had a large population of African descent since its founding” (The Historic Natchez Pageant, 1932, p. 3). This is quite a rhetorical move to let the French be responsible the introduction of slavery in the region. It also tells the story of Ibrahima, the African Prince who became a Natchez slave²³. Following the French occupation the tableau depicts the transition to Spanish flag and occupation saying that even after the American takeover, “the Spanish

²³ See T. Alford’s (2007). *Prince among slaves*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

loved Natchez and refused to leave” (p. 3). Finally the United States flag is raised setting the stage for territorial days and subsequent statehood.

The next tableau, “The May Festival,” is very popular because it includes children as young as three and four. The youngsters dance around the May Pole weaving ribbon in intricate patterns while older adolescents depict courting scenes. Club member Sarah Hankens says the scene is meant to symbolize the carefree days of childhood in the South. This tableau is often children’s first involvement in the Pilgrimage. They dress in period costumes such as bloomers, day dresses or knickers. Participating in the May Pole dance is part of the pedigree that leads children to a place on the royal court when they are older.

The pride of Natchez is depicted in the third tableau, “A Natchez Bride for Jefferson Davis.” Jefferson Davis is best known as the only president of the Confederate States of America. The script states, “Davis grew up near Natchez and in 1845 married a Natchez belle, Varina Howell of The Briars, where their wedding took place” (The Historic Natchez Pageant, 1932, p. 3). The wedding scene is elaborate with flower girls and ring bearers. It is clear that Jefferson Davis’s connection to Natchez is a source of pride.

The fourth tableau is the “Picnic at Concord.” Concord was the grand mansion built by the last Spanish-born governor. After his departure in 1797, ownership passed to Stephen Minor and “the house became the center of culture and hospitality” (The Historic Natchez Pageant, 1932, p. 4). When Minor’s son inherited the home, his wife,

Rebecca, continued the tradition of opening the home for an annual picnic. The pageant represents the festivities with planters and wives dancing the Virginia Reel.

The fifth tableau continues this gaiety. Girls are dancing the polka emphasizing “social gatherings at elegant mansions [that] were frequent for young and old.” This continuation of dancing and lively song suggests that the South was a land of riches and merriment.

A scene not currently depicted in the pageant is that of slaves working and singing spirituals in the fields. The depiction was taken out of the pageant in the 1950s because of pressing racial tensions. In place of this scene, the pageant has one Black boy carrying a fishing pole and skipping along.

“Showboat Under-the-Hill” is the theme of the sixth tableau. A crowd gathers on the bluff just above where boats docked, where a flamboyant Austrian ballerina, Fannie Elssler, entertains the crowd. Among the crowd it is mentioned that Mr. and Mrs. William Johnson were awaiting the showboat. Johnson was the famous free Black barber of Natchez. Interesting to note, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson are not shown on stage; they are just mentioned in the narrative.



Figure 5.1: Picnic at Concord in Natchez, Mississippi



Figure 5.2 (n. d.). Slave Workers. The Natchez Garden Club Archives at Magnolia Hall in Natchez, Mississippi

The next tableau is a “Soiree at Jefferson Military College.”

Soirees were among the many pleasant activities for students at the nearby boys’ college. The young cadets invited Natchez’ [sic] prettiest young ladies to join them at their springtime soirees, highlighted by the sweetheart waltz” (The Historic Natchez Pageant, 2006, p. 5).



Figure 5.3: Soiree at Jefferson College in Natchez, Mississippi

The seventh tableau shows a group of men gathering “Before the Hunt.” This is the only scene that depicts all men. They drink from silver cups and raise them to toast the success of the chase. The previous scenes are dominated by women in their grand ball gowns. The men in this scene are similarly dressed in fine hunting attire and stand alongside their hounds.

The crescendo to the pageant is the “Confederate Farewell Ball.” Young men wear their blue and gray uniforms and court the young ladies before their send-off. The script states:

Although the people of Natchez were divided on the issue of secession and war, they united in spirit and ideals. Whatever the outcome of the War Between the States, they felt duty-bound to support the Confederacy and rally round its flag.

(The Historic Natchez Pageant, 1932, p. 5)

With the Confederate flag raised, Natchez ultimately sides with the Confederacy, and it is represented in the crowning of the queen who represents the South. The script explains:

The most popular belle, resplendent as a queen in royal raiment, was accompanied by her king, who had exchanged his royal clothes for a general’s uniform. Attended by their immediate circles of friends, lovely belles escorted by Confederate officers, the regal couple reigned over the festivities honoring the men who fought and died so bravely for the Southern cause. (p. 5)

The queen is protected by the male officers and this reinstates the patriarchy of the South. In the end the script reads, “Look away, look away, look away. Dixieland...And

that is what they did. They lived and died for Dixie—for a way of life and for a state of mind” (p. 5).

Rather than end on that note, the pageant offers redemption for the South saying, “But the same stalwart spirit which propelled these men to fight for Dixie became their strength as the South valiantly sought to become a part of a reunited nation, under God, with American flag triumphant” (The Natchez Historic Pageant, 1932, p. 5). As these words fade, the Confederate flag is lowered to the sound of “Dixie” and the audience stands in respect at the passing of the Confederacy.

Portraits

Sarah Hankens is the oldest living member of The Club. Her mother was the club’s longtime secretary. In large part because of her mother’s work, Hankens was elected queen in the early 1940s. Years later, she was elected to be president of The Club, and she still serves The Club in an advisory position. Hankens has many memories of The Club as a child. She fondly remembers playing in the garden at the house on Ellicott Hill, one of The Club’s homes. Hankens remembers the financial burden of being queen in the war years. Despite the recession, her family spared no expense in providing an appropriate dress for The Pageant. “It was worth it. That is what we did. It was like Christmas, Easter and your wedding all rolled into one.”

Thelma Tullos is another senior member of The Club. Though not originally from Natchez, her mother-in-law was an original member. She became a member upon her marriage. Tullos became President in the 1950s. Her daughter was then elected queen of The Pageant. She said, “Back in my hometown we didn’t have anything like

this [the Pilgrimage]. I think it is great. It is important. It is what holds the town together and gives it a purpose.”

Elisabeth Knight is the current president. She was the youngest member interviewed. She spoke about the history of The Club as well as the importance of her leadership position. She said, “People think our work is about playing Southern belles. They think it is about dressing up, parties and playing house. It is so much more than that. There is real work there. We are historic preservers.”

Terry Smith was queen in the late 1940s. She later became President. Smith had a number of memorable and funny stories about incidents that occurred in the celebration. As queen, she hosted Eisenhower as he toured the homes. She also welcomed Eleanor Roosevelt when she came to The Pageant. She giggled as she told the story about Mrs. Roosevelt getting stuck in a bathtub in her hotel room. She was a bit offended when Mrs. Roosevelt walked out of The Pageant.

Stephanie Wall was queen in the early 1950s and later became President. Wall remembers hosting in the homes as a child. She greeted guests and took up tickets at King’s Tavern while dressed in period dress. She remembers being fearful of the home’s supposed ghost. Wall speaks of her childhood in The Club saying, “We didn’t know anything different. That is how it always was. I am glad I grew up in The Club. It prepared me to be a young lady.”

Jennifer Wall is the daughter of Stephanie Wall. She too became queen in the late 1970s. She remembers her mother working late nights for The Club. She states, “I learned from a young age that there was responsibility attached to The Club. It was

more than a social organization. Our mothers worked and so did I. We preserved Natchez.”

Holly Hunt was queen in the 1950s. Hunt talked about how queens were educated. She argued that while there was no formal, spoken of curriculum, it was a way of life. She states, “We looked to our mothers and emulated their poise and grace...They always knew how to act in social situations and as future leaders in The Club we had to carry ourselves in the same manner. It has served us well.”

James Bennett’s mother was a queen in the 1950s. He was King then. Bennett spoke of not wanting to disappoint his mother. He says, “I knew my actions reflected on her. Out of respect for her I upheld the values of The Club.” He also spoke of the role The Club played in the economy of Natchez. “They deserve recognition. These were no women playing around. They had an agenda to preserve Natchez and they have accomplished it. They did more than many men.”

Matriarchy

Each year The Club is responsible for planning and performing The Pageant. From year to year the legacy of The Club is carried from one generation to the next. The same families that took part in The Club years ago are the same families that continue to participate in The Club today. There is an expectation that the Queen of The Pageant will come back to participate in The Club’s activities when she matures, assuming that her social and cultural associations remain ever fixed with The Club’s membership agenda. In interviews, the idea that The Club is a matriarchy becomes evident. Terry Smith explains that she was chosen to be queen “because my mom was queen.” James Bennett, a non-club member, explains he was selected to be king

because “my mother was president and her work earned me a place [on the royal court].” Former queen and president Sarah Hankens “worked hard so my daughter could be queen.”

The Club has engaged in education through sponsorship over many decades now. From one generation to the next, The Club has consistently served as an agent through which pedagogies of privilege are taught and learned. Ascent to one of the power positions in The Club is tied to genealogy and privilege, access and class, and social expectations. Socialized and schooled through pageants and parties, young women learn poise and the social graces necessary to befall the high-society in Natchez. While this education in ways of wealth and privilege is not always necessarily explicit and/or evident to the young women who participate in the pageant, it is subtly realized through the sponsored activities in which The Club’s mothers, daughters, and women engage.

Ms. Thelma Tullos, a member since 1946, was proud to report of her great-granddaughter’s début alongside other children as young as age three leaping around maypoles. She beamed with pride stating, “This will be the fourth generation in the Pilgrimage within my family.” This illustration shows the ways that young children, especially girls, are groomed to be a part of The Club.

To become queen, all entrants to the court must be students who are recognized for their academic achievement as well as their civic involvement, but it is one’s family lineage that ultimately serves to solidify a position of royalty. And it is the mothers of the participants who ultimately must invest themselves in the process. As one of the mothers I interviewed pointed out when I asked how one becomes Queen:

TS: Well I think it was ... really you get points for working.

JN-G: She worked or you worked? I know there was some work on your part.

TS: Yes [pointing to herself,] It is the mothers who do the work [laughs].

Indeed, mothers work hard to give their daughters the opportunity to be Queen knowing that with the title comes a great deal of respect for the Queen's family among the other wealthy elites in Natchez. The young inductees are introduced to society at an exclusive private ball where Club members honor the royalty's outstanding character with a private meeting with The Club President and a presentation and procession to the music of "Dixie."

Ostrander (1984) contends that it was the upper class woman's "duty" to teach, guide and lead. She quotes Goldstone (1974), who argues, "It is her role of socializer of the next generation of upper class people that does the most to perpetuate class distinctions" (Goldstone, 1974, p. 123). To these ends, it is the Club's tradition to have members' children and grandchildren take part in the pageantry. Through these activities, children progress through a process of grooming that begins with participation as a maypole dancer very early in their lives and eventually (and ideally) leads to a confirmed place on The Pageant's royal court. As one young Queen explains, "I started off young in The Pageant. I was a maypole dancer but I always wanted to be Queen. We all did."

The royal court represents The Club and is headed by a King and Queen, but it is clear to all that it is the Queen who truly reigns as the symbolic embodiment of the Pilgrimage. When she is formally presented, everyone participating in the pageant bows while the king stands back. She is likely to have followed in her mother's

footsteps as Queen and must meet a specific and idealized set of criteria that deem her refined and fit to represent Natchez, The Club, and the South; she has become the ultimate Southern belle who rules over The Pageant and promoting the principles of the Lost Cause.

Social Graces and Sacrifices

The Queen is at the center of the biannual festivities. While she is never given direct instructions on how to act, former Queen Stephanie Wall explains, “It was just understood what your responsibilities are. Be respectful and represent The Club in a perfect way. It is that Southern charm that we don't necessarily teach, we learn throughout our entire lives.” Her words are poignant and provide unyielding evidence that learning occurs in complex and complicated ways. Member Holly Hunt describes the skills she was expected to learn as “social graces.” She says, “You know, manners. How you carry yourself in public. The way you represent The Club. All those things you are supposed to do to prove yourself a poised, elegant, classy woman.” Former Queen and President Jennifer Wall talks about how she prepared her daughter to be queen. She states, “We taught her manners. How to behave like a young woman should. It was just about being a lady. If you were going to represent The Club, you had to be eloquent and graceful in public.” These social literacies are learned and taught in subtle but nonetheless powerful, prescriptive ways.

Manners matter in The Club's culture as well as in the South. Wilson (2006) writes, “Manners long provided a way to perform regional identity” (p. 5). It is important to note as Wilson does that “women teach proper behavior” (p. 99) because “Southern women have long used feminine manners to survive in the region's patriarchal culture”

(p. 98). Women use manners to distinguish themselves from others. Wilson writes, “Southern manners were not only a community binding force, an agreed upon code for groups to aspire to; they were also divisive, separating those with manners from those without” (p. 99). The Club’s emphasis on manners reflects this need to establish a place in the social order of the South and, “manners make privileged status seem natural, legitimating a hierarchical society” (p. 103).

The Queen’s duties include attending luncheons as well as dinner parties and lectures hosted by The Club. As Tullos explains,

The young women invest so much time in these parties and in The Pageant shows, which last up to a month. Most Queens take off a semester from college so that they can devote themselves full time to service as the Queen.

Tullos was president and later her daughter was selected to be Queen. She talks about her daughter’s Queenship, stating that her daughter,

was at Ole Miss. No, she was at William and Carrie²⁴ for two years and then transferred to Ole Miss [University of Mississippi]. And she came home to be Queen ... No, well, let me think, ah, she took a semester off, because at that time they did the [Pageant] the entire month.

This reinforces how important the educational experience of The Club is to the young ladies who take part in the activities.

Of course, the luxury of taking off an entire semester in order to attend parties and participate in the shows is not one afforded to just anyone. Additionally, the cost of being Queen includes the high price of the elaborate period style gown that is required

²⁴ A small college in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

for one's place in the show. In return for her *sacrifices*, the labor of time and expense, the Queen ensures not only her place in Natchez society, but also her children's place – for they are ensured access to The Club's activities, elite social status, and privileges of the affluent not afforded to those outside of the court. The club members felt the monetary investment and the commitment of time was well worth the investment because as Sarah Hankens states, "That insured the girl's place in society and her children's [place] too."

The notion of sacrifice is important. Elisabeth Knight said, "We sacrificed our time and money to be on the court, but there were rewards for it." Women have traditionally sacrificed themselves for their families. They gave up their own aspirations for an advanced education and a job to take on roles as wives and mothers though many women found ways to accomplish their various roles all at once. The sacrifices the young women of The Club made are an extension of this. They know their place in the social order. Their sacrifices do place them above others, and they were revered in the culture. They were always submissive to White men, however.

In conjunction with the pageant the Black population performed spirituals on alternating days so that tourists could enjoy both. From the beginning, Blacks found ways to speak back to The Club. More studies need to be done on this area of sponsorship.

Keeping House

The social literacies required to be Queen and to earn a permanent place among the Southern belles of Natchez demand more than learning to comport like a Queen. They also require learning the proper manners for "keeping house." In addition to

participating in The Pageant, the Queen is often included in the club's show of homes along with other members of the royal court, including preteen girls who may eventually become Queens. The young women are situated beside older members of The Club to offer histories of the homes as well as stories about the town's grand past for tourists who come from all over the country to see both The Pageant and the show of homes. Sarah Hankens reported welcoming guests into one of the Natchez homes when she was a child. She says, "We dressed up in costumes and greeted visitors as they came to the home. Sometimes my mother would let us tell the stories [about the home]. We just did our part." Terry Smith talks about the excitement she felt as a young child taking part in the house tours. She says, "We thought we were something. All dressed up and all. We acted like little ladies. Everyone was proud of how we carried ourselves." In the act of telling these stories to the audience, the young women of Natchez learn the proper narratives and the ways of presenting them to the outside world. During this event, the young women are literally "keeping house" by cleaning and caring for the home while at the same time positioning themselves as historic authorities amongst the Natchez elite.

In addition, they are maintaining the household in a particular sense of internal stability and image to the outside world. This concept relates to family dynamics as well as to how a family or The Club interacts with their community. Their place as hostesses in these grand mansions helps increase the likelihood that, if they are not already Queen, they someday will serve as such. These positions as young hostesses become the stepping stones to their place in Natchez's history. The eldest member I interviewed explained that the queenship is passed from one generation to the next, and the

Queens are more likely to become presidents of The Club. As former Queen Holly Hunt explains, “Most Queens are expected to go on in The Club. You know to become President.”

While many modern women (and men) think the appeal to “keep house” has long passed with the feminist movements as noted by club member Stephanie Wall, that is not necessarily the case. In the company of hostesses, young girls are likely to find role models in older women who have greatly impacted the community through their civic service in The Club. One younger member of the club emphasizes, “People, now ‘a days, think keeping house isn’t in fashion. But it is important. We have to have our best faces on.” Because of the inherent exclusivity of The Club’s activities and lineage, it is not uncommon that the elder grandmother figures are the same women who are charter members of The Club and had served as an important part of Miller’s legacy that saved the town from economic ruin. These women who lead visitors on home tours are the gatekeepers who hold on to wealth and power through their practices in the club. “Keeping house” became as much about keeping one’s own home as it is about keeping the legacy of The Club alive and well.

Another interviewee explained that, increasingly, as the “middle generation of The Club choose to hold jobs such as interior designers [that] prevent them from serving as hostesses, The Club looks to the younger women to take the lead from the generations that came before.” They are filling in where their mothers do not, creating a significant generational gap among The Club’s active and central membership. It is not uncommon to have elder women who are in their 70s serving alongside young women

who are in their early teens. Between them are mothers with professional careers who are unable to devote much time to The Club.

While this generational gap may be seen by passive observers as less than important, even trivial, its significance to the sustainability and presence of The Club cannot be overlooked. The Club rests on these young women for their continuation and future success as cultural purveyors. The young women become puppeteers for a privileged world they might not even understand because of their young age. With young girls in their teens, it is difficult for anyone to expect that they will know the full weight of the Pilgrimage, of what it represents and fails to represent. In one sense, it shows the loyalty that the young women have for The Club. But also the gap allows The Club to continue even as the women in the middle pursue professional careers. Social literacies are passed from grandmothers to adolescents, who then go to work, only to return later in life to the full service of the club.

The Club has done considerable work grooming and educating many young women in the Natchez community, but it has left out any discussion about race. Instead all that The Club offers are images of a glorious past that involves no personal trepidation about the town's dependence on slave labor. Just one Black resident of Natchez participates in (and very few attend – if any) the modern pageant. As one of the more frank members of The Club shared:

Early pageants did however include a single depiction of Black life. That one scene showed slaves happily singing as they worked out from a large plantation home in the field. Under pressure during the fight for Civil Rights, the Garden Club chose to exclude this scene from the pageant all together.

They replaced it by having a young Black boy skip across the stage with a fishing pole. This direct omission highlights not only The Club's desire to erase part of their troubled legacy of slavery and racism, but also serves as a purposeful effort to maintain a sympathetic following that supports the idea of "noblesse oblige" - the idea that the upper classes are better than the other – and therefore entitled to their high position" (Goldstone, 1974, p. 123 as cited in Ostrander, 1984, p. 25).

Conclusion

As I leave one of my final interviews, I drive through the various neighborhoods of Natchez. The first are the wealthy estates that are lined with live oaks. In front of many of the homes flies a blue flag, symbolizing that a Queen of the Pilgrimage lives there. It is a mark of distinction. It lets everyone in town know that royalty lives on in Natchez. Further out, the homes decrease in size and no blue flags fly. Finally, I am driving through a neighborhood with small quarters stacked almost on top of one another. It feels like these small homes are hundreds of miles apart from the grand mansions of the wealthy Natchezians. It strikes me that in fact they are worlds apart from the oak lined streets that house the town's wealthy elites, though in reality they are less than a mile apart.

Traditions are strongly upheld by The Club. From The Pageant to the tour of homes, the stories of The Club are circulated and expectations for young women are set. As Tullos states, "Poise and social graces are important for our children to learn." This is what Grumet (1988) speaks of as curriculum, what mothers teach their children. These beliefs and customs become the curriculum that dictates how the future club members will be enculturated to Lost Cause ideals about being and doing among the

wealthy. As Brandt (2001a) articulates, “Literacy is also a productive resource, a means of production and reproduction, including a means by which legacies of human experience move from past to future and by which, for many, identities are made and sustained” (p. 6).

The strong effort by The Club to have young women assume places on pedestals as queens and other members of the court reflects its desire to reinstate the ideals of the Lost Cause, which places everyone in a hierarchy. Wealthy, White women have a very precarious position, which is made possible by their wealth. Their wealth insured them a place celebrated in Southern society, below White males but superior to the rest of the population. They use that position to further their own authority by reinforcing class distinctions. Their defense is that their class will protect the culture from the ills of society. For this, they sacrificed their own interests, education, and careers to become club women.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSION

The Club is just how we understand life.

-Sarah Hankens

Natchez Garden Club Member

Without considering how people--in this case, elite, Southern, White women--are educated beyond the classroom, researchers and educators unproductively limit their conceptions of education and literacy as they learn to read the world. They overlook integral and significant processes of socialization, acculturation, and reification of inequitable structures in and beyond traditional schooling. Much is learned in spaces not typically conceived as “educational,” particularly in spaces like that of The Club. These spaces prove ultimately very important to social and educational experiences and opportunities.

As Ostrander (1984) notes of the women in her study:

The women themselves are clear that they could not have gotten to their board chairs through paid positions in the occupational structure. A woman well-known in the community for her activities in the circles of power of business, banking, academia and culture said frankly, “I was able to get higher in volunteerism than I would have as a paid employee. I am able to direct procedure and get involved in the power structure.” (p. 31)

The same can be said of the women of The Natchez Garden Club.

For elite women like those of The Club in Natchez, volunteerism and service to the organization not only serve their own personal satisfaction, but also work to reinforce the power of class – a woman who volunteers does not need the income and can give of herself to service in ways that working class women cannot. Make no mistake, the women of The Club work hard and deserve recognition for a “job well done” for the hours spent in planning, executing, and supporting local businesses and promoting the city’s tourist industry. However, the underlying motives of “elite control” and maintenance of social systems and structures must be problematized (Ostrander, 1984).

The desire and ability to establish community institutions for the “protection” of class values is both a purpose and outcome of “individuals combin[ing] to a collective class effort toward power and privilege” (Ostrander, 1984, p. 35). Organizations and clubs like the group in Natchez work both tacitly and inconspicuously to screen for access, thereby limiting and controlling power and influence. Moreover, working as literacy sponsors and gatekeepers to social and cultural knowledge, senior members ensure the passing on of sacred traditions and ideas about living and learning.

The first question this study sought to address was how The Club promoted literacy in The Club and the community. The women engaged in writing history through a textbook, *Our Mississippi*, and other tourist publications *Natchez* and *Natchez of Long Ago and the Pilgrimage*; through the periodical, *Over the Garden Wall*; and through performances such as *The Natchez Historic Pageant* and home tours. Based on my analysis all of these texts, The Club focused on homes and glossed over slavery; when

mentioning slavery, they painted it as a paternalistic act, and romanticized the pre-Civil War era as one in which there was a social order that was assumed natural and good.

These texts promoted the Lost Cause mentality in a number of ways. They supported patriarchy, which held that men should rule society. They saw men's power as paternalistic and benevolent. Finally, they depended on privilege to give women their elite place in society. The women translated the aristocracy of the Old South through their volunteerism. Their benevolence was defense for the social ranking they promoted as normal and beneficial for all.

To answer question two, which asked how might educational practices of select Southern, White, elite women be theorized in the lives of the Natchez Garden Club and its members during the 1930s, 40s and 50s, I found three main areas of literacy emerged from my study that reflect The Club's commitment to the Lost Cause: community literacies, performative literacies and privilege literacies.

Community Literacies

The Club practices community literacies, which are literacies that the community of Natchez uses in their recreation of the Old South. They create a cultural literacy of Natchez by establishing what young people are to believe about the town's past. The members do this in a number of ways, such as putting on the pageant and authoring a number of books including one textbook. To pass on ideas about literacy and learning, Long (2008) asks how ordinary people go public with their literacy practices. This reflects the shift from the academy and work places to community practices. This dissertation demonstrates how the Natchez Garden Club community shaped literacy and how literacy shaped the community. It asks how does The Club make community

literacies a public act.

Through their community literacies The Club educated youth, community members and tourists. How is it schooling, in the informal sense of the word? The Club as a literacy sponsor approaches education from the private front rather than the public in order to teach Natchez history and culture. They accomplished community literacies through their benevolent acts, charity, work in beautifying the city, writing texts, creating performances and hosting home tours. This is how they made sense of their world, writing it across the landscape of Natchez culture.

For The Club, one of the most important ways they enacted community literacies is through their economic practices. Brandt (2009) writes, “The economy’s appetite for ever more productive communication suggests a different perspective on the nation’s so-called literacy crisis” (p. xi). Economic competition is defining literacies for the community of Natchez. Furthermore, Brandt (2009) states, “[The economy] also shapes the rationales for acquiring literacy, how it is understood, valued and evaluated” (p. xii)

Brandt critiques literacy sponsors:

Sponsors of literacy proliferated mightily over the last hundred years, particularly as ‘human capital’ became more integral to economic production and profit. As sponsors compete with each other for dominance, they often use our literacy as the grounds of competition as they try to gain the upper hand. (p. xiii-xiv)

The Club would characterize its community work as benevolence, charity and volunteerism that integrated their public work with their economic interests. They see their work as for the greater good of the community without considering the ways that it served the interest of The Club by maintaining the illusion of wealth within the

community and privilege for a few.

The city of Natchez was suffering economically in the midst of the 1930s depression. That is the time The Club comes in and begins its work as a literacy sponsor that writes and re-crafts history into their version of Natchez life. They took reading from a private act done in the privacy of women's rooms to public discussions on womanhood, history and the South.

Finally, with the books that the club women published, they were marketing to school publishing houses, tourists and community members. They were not simply producing them for themselves. They were literacy sponsors in every meaning of the word. These women were not merely social lights who donned hoop skirts to play dress-up. They had agendas. One was to defend the town from economic downfall. But secondly, and perhaps more importantly, their agenda was to reassure their important places in Natchez society despite the fact that they had lost most of their wealth in the depression. Their place as society women gave them the allusion of wealth and power.

The Club became a major economic factor in tourist industry of Natchez. In the midst of the great depression it raised the modern day equivalent of two million dollars, a considerable boost to the poor economy. These women had turned the Lost Cause into an industry that appealed for others' mythic hopes and dreams that never was. They were writing history for themselves and selling it to the public.

The books, the periodical, and the pageant-all were mechanisms by which community literacies were getting passed along to young people, community members and tourists. They taught that women had domesticated roles inside The Club, the

private realm, and that is where they flourished. They found inroads within the domestic sphere where they could invert the power structure and assume a more aggressive role. For example, women who coordinated and performed in the pageant and tour of homes had considerable leverage in deciding how Natchez would be portrayed in history. By reversing the economic power structure in the town, the women also challenged the role of women in the community. While the town had the appearance that the women of The Club were still performing domestic roles, they had in fact upset the system so that they assumed power just as domestic feminism suggested.

Performative Literacy

For The Club, performative literacies are the ways that The Club teaches young girls how to be women. There they taught manners, dress, and who to interact with and how to carry themselves. All of these lessons form their notions of race, class and gender in The Club.

From the age of three, young people participate in the Maypole dances and continue performing in the pageant until they take their place on the royal court. Dressed in hoop skirts and bonnets, women play well the role of a Southern woman. Through these activities, they hyperfeminize women consequence and reify male superiority. Although they portray themselves as hyperfeminize women, they became important leaders in the traditionally male dominated public sphere.

One of the ways performative literacy functions is in how they take up a particular femininity of the Southern belle. This work is under the guise of femininity, but the work that they do is clearly in the public realm. While in community literacies women feel

comfortable enough to upturn the usual patriarchal power structure, they veiled themselves with performative acts of hyperfemininity to make sense of their world by recreating a version of the past that never was but was always longed for by them. While the pageant confines women to hoop skirts, suggesting a subservience, it is the queen to whom everyone bows, leading others to believe women occupy an important and powerful role in Natchez's history.

Women take up the public sphere by practicing or performing municipal housekeeping. And while they saw themselves as different from men, they believed their roles were no less valuable. They embraced the gender they were expected to perform and performed it to "perfection" by becoming "perfect Southern belles," but that did not mean they were less important to Natchez.

Privilege Literacies

Besides The Club's interest in community and performative literacies is their attention to privilege literacies, which I have come to understand, is literacies that teach elitism, handed down from one generation to the next. Bourdieu (1987) calls this inculcation of the social structures habitus. He argues that lessons such as race, class and gender become so normalized that it seems natural to young people such as those in Natchez.

The mechanism that The Club uses to convey their ideas about privilege literacies are the books, the periodical, the pageant and the tour of homes. Guyton's book portrays plantation homes 27 times suggesting that Natchez was a place of wealth. The pageant depicts the town as a carefree place that hosted celebrations and dances. The tour of homes features only large homes of Natchez, omitting slaves'

quarters.

The irony of The Club's practice of privilege is that, for many of the club women, the wealth that their families once had was no longer there. They had the appearance of wealth with their large home but had less material wealth to substantiate that image. This is evident in some of the homes' disrepair because the homeowners' could not afford to have damages repaired.

Still privilege continues to be reproduced despite the lack of monetary funds. It has become performing privilege which had become such a habitus, in Bourdieu's terms, that it became a cultural capital. The women use that cultural capital to perform privilege and they do that very well.

Epilogue

The Natchez Garden Club worked hard to reproduce and reconfigure the ideas of the Lost Cause Movement, which are patriarchy, paternalism, and privilege. As literacy sponsors, they appropriated and reinforced these principles through the texts that they produce. Ultimately, however, The Club inverted patriarchy and paternalism in order to gain power for its members in disguised, discrete, and covert terms in a matrilineal society that they created. It reified race and class in complex ways but simultaneously disrupts notions that patriarchy excluded women from leadership roles in Natchez.

The Club no longer holds the significance that it once did. It no longer brings in the millions of dollars that had previously meant so much to The Club. In fact, in 2010, it earned only six hundred dollars during the pageant. Increasingly, the young women of the town are choosing to move away and have not become active members of The Club. The message of The Club, the extension of the Lost Cause, is no longer drawing

support because the discourse has changed. The Club tries to be more inclusive, inviting men into The Club, yet The Club remains racially segregated. Since the inception of the pageant, Blacks in Natchez have tried to resolve this division by performing spirituals on alternated days from the pageant. The Club has not been able to close the racial gap that separates its club members from Blacks in the town.

For me, this study was very important. It not only occurred in a place I consider home, but it also reflected my upbringing. As a young girl, I was asked to remove my father's shoes when he came home from work. This had a large impact on the ways I viewed the gender hierarchy. I was taught that men were the head of the household and women were subservient. The women of The Club represented a compelling alternative where women could be both domestic and powerful. It was appealing for me to see women in leadership roles.

Ironically, I learned that in The Club the gender hierarchy was replaced by a racial hierarchy. In addition, I discovered that any time a group is given power there exists a weaker counterpart that has the potential for exploitation. For me, this study complicates the power structures that I hoped to understand.

Beyond the personal lessons that I learned, I also found that it is important to study up to see how privileged and elite women of The Club made sense of their world and how it affected the rest of society, how privilege becomes normative. Additionally, it has been important to examine the informal modes of education as the ways that literacies are passed down. For these reasons this study has been significant.

Being in Natchez for me was a long process of coming to terms with who I am,

as well as who these club women are. There is no magic quota that one can fill to make one feminist, non-racist, or non-elitist. Everyone struggles with these conflicts every day, but in different terms. However, I hope this study and my journey have revealed that everyone struggles to better one's self.

Throughout this study, I slowly built relationships with the women of The Club and my work became personal, something that Geertz (1989) warns us against saying that it is inappropriate to interiorize too much of "what is in fact an intensely public activity" (p. 4). Many of the women I spoke to identified me as like themselves, Southern, White, and privileged. In fact I was very much like them. As much as I was researching "the other," I was constantly comparing myself to the participants and shifting my gaze back to what I had known and believed prior to my learning and work at the university. I still grapple with these issues and ask how much of myself was I actually researching.

In those introductory courses to research, qualitative or quantitative, instructors make interpretation of the data sound so easy. It is not imposing or vicarious in any way. But in the reality of the situation I was imposing meaning. I was vicariously interpreting The Club, the women--all the while their stories and my story became entwined. I could have been one of these women if I had made a few different choices. I could see my grandmother and my mother in them. I could see myself.

I became aware of how I was caught in between worlds when I was at the pageant with my dissertation advisor and the audience stood for the Dixie flag. As I debated on whether or not to stand with the rest of the audience or remain seated, I realized I was situated between two literacy sponsors: The Club and the academy.

While they seemed opposed to one another, they were in fact seeking to do the same thing, educate young women. This education may come with very different ideological messages, but both help women achieve more autonomy in the spaces which they dwell. What The Club has done is create a space where women learn the ideas of social graces that have roots in the Lost Cause Movement.

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APPENDIX A

NATCHEZ GARDEN CLUB SURVEY

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____ Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Are you an active member of the Natchez Garden Club?

___ Yes. How long? _____

___ No

Are you an active member of the Pilgrimage Garden Club?

___ Yes. How long? _____

___ No

Have you ever been a member of royalty in the Pilgrimage?

___ Yes. What year? _____

___ No

Have you ever been an officer in the Natchez Garden Club?

___ Yes. When and what position? _____

___ No

Have you ever served on a committee for the Natchez Garden Club?

___ Yes. What committee? _____

___ No

I am looking to interview women who were members of the Natchez Garden Club during the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Can you please list any relevant names that I should contact and their phone number (if you know it)?

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

One

What is your name? What is your maiden name?

What is your mother's name?

Did she have a role in the Natchez Garden Club? If so, what was her role?

Did she work?

What is your father's name and job?

What is your husband's name and occupation?

Did you work? If so, where did you work?

Where did you grow up? Can you describe life there?

What are your earliest memories of the Natchez Garden Club?

Did you grow up in The Club? Were you a member of the Junior Garden Club? Can you describe the Junior Garden Club activities?

What about your childhood and early married life in Natchez important for you as I talk about Natchez?

Is there anything else I should know?

Two

When did you join The Club?

What was your reason for joining?

Were you ever a queen or on the royal court? If so how were you chosen? What did you have to do to prepare for it? What were your major roles as queen or maid?

Did anyone mentor you in the program?

Who was your biggest influence in The Club?

Were you ever an officer? What position? What year? What did that involve? Can you describe your role?

Did you ever serve on the textbook committee? If so, what did it involve?

Did you ever serve on the Junior Garden Club committee?

What were the committees you served on and how were they important?

How would you say The Club has influenced education/children in the community?

What is the lasting legacy of the Natchez Garden Club and the women of The Club?

How has The Club changed over the years?

Is there anything else I should know?

Three

These interviews were targeted based on previous interviews and other data uncovered.

APPENDIX C:

ARTICLE TITLES OF 18 ISSUES OF *OVER THE GARDEN WALL*

September 1947

Club Calendar
Message from the President
Roadside Memorial Parks
Flower Arrangement
Story
Our Churches
Junior Garden Club Activities
Fall Flower Tips
News from Other Clubs
Our Children Say
Viewpoints
Time to Plant
Top O' the Wall
Society News
Better Food for Less Money
Other Clubs
Flower Arrangements

October 1947*

Club Calendar
Message from President

Ten Commandments for the Modern Wife

Editorially Speaking

Made a Mistake? Well, What of It?

American Gardens and the Sources

Halloween

A Friendly Insect

Fallen Leaves

Churches and Charities

Junior Garden Club

The Record I Keep of Myself

Top O' the Wall

News from Other Clubs

Our Children

Time to Plant

Natchez Gun Club

Society Chatter

Better Meals for Less Money

May 1948

Club Calendar

Natchez Has Part in New York Vacation and Travel Show

Remember

Editorially Speaking

Orchid for Mr. Nosser

President's Message

Impressions of Mississippi Sesquicentennial

Care of the Bulbs

Daisies are Telling

The Marriage Month Approaches

Do You Know

Society Chatter

Test Your Driving Ability

Our Junior Activities

Call to Gardeners

Top O' the Wall

Helpful Hints in Conserving Wild Flowers

Orchid to the Artist and His Gracious Lady

Do You Know the Seven Wonders of the World?

January 1948

Club Calendar

Pilgrimage Committee Secretaries Busy

The King and Queen

Celebrated Natchez Child

Editorially Speaking

Leap Year

President's Message

Information for Gardeners

Society Chatter

Prophecies Wise and Other Wise from 1948

Junior Garden Club

Indoor Planting

Gardens and Morals

OUR HERO-Robert Edward Lee

News from Other Clubs

Winter Care for Plants and Trees

Recipes from Antebellum Homes

Books ... to Read to the Very Young

May 1949

Natchez Garden Club Presents Program

Editorially Speaking

My Mother's Hands

Mothers Day

Table Talks

Our Annual Flower Show

The Green Thumb

Early Churches of Natchez

Our Twelfth "First Lady"

Early Taverns of the Natchez Trace

The American Legion: For God and Country

Pack of Cards Proves Prayer Book and Bible

October 1949

Club Officer

Pilgrimage Committees for Natchez Garden Club

Editorially Speaking

President's Message

No Occupation

Jenny Lind in New Orleans and Natchez

Green Thumb...Roses in October

Narcissus

Legend of the Lotus

Turn Back the Years

Calling All Camellia Lovers

The American Girl

Have You Ever Seen

Necessary

Canasta (Basket)

Plant Bulbs Now

All Roads Lead to Natchez

A Father's Heartfelt Appeal

Halloween Table Talk

Halloween

Marriage

Hint to Our Garden Club

May 1950

Club Officers

Club Calendar for May

Editorially Speaking

President's Message

Club Affairs

Attention Club Members!

Outstanding Business and Professional Women

Speaking for the Defense

Report of National Council of State Garden Clubs

Convention Preview

Outstanding Women

Louisa May Alcott

Old Records

Fortune of Felines

Design for a Walk

What is Your No. 1 Word?

Social Uplift

September 1950

Club Officers

Club Calendar for September and October 1950

President's Message

Editorially Speaking

Garden Club Purchases Father Lennan's House

List of Standing Committees

The Green Thumb

Wives of United States President Since 1865

Famous American Women

Butterflies

Famous Southern Recipes

Deed of Gifts

Interesting Old Slave Sales

January 1951

Club Officers

Club Calendar for January

President's Message

Dates to Remember

Editorially Speaking

Rural Darkies Honor Mrs. Ferriday Byrnes

Early Defense System Still Stands in Flordia

Old Wills

Hats Off to Beverly

Wild Flowers of Mississippi

Concise Sketch of Robert E. Lee

Top O' The Wall

Southern Recipes

How to Increase Your Happiness in 1951

Orchid: Aristocrat of Flowers

The Milk of Human Kindness

Beliefs Across the Atlantic

What's in a Name

Korean War Creates Its Own Vocabulary

Natchez: Uncle Sam's Mail Stepchild

March 1951

Club Officers

Club Calendar for March

President's Message

Dog of the Confederacy

Subjects of Pilgrimage Pageant Tableaux

Editorially Speaking

Dedicated to O. O. Mcl.

Service

Natchez Far and Wide

"We Take Life's Beauties for Granted"

As Others See Us

Wild Flowers in Mississippi

Outlook for Camellias

The National Anthem—the Star-Spangled Banner

Used-Car Capital

Act Friendly and Be Liked

One Way Out

Believe It or Else

In Memory of “Betty” Peabody

Resolutions

Our Pilgrimage King and Queen

For Junior Gardeners

Gardener’s Creed

Tall Tales

Women Increase in U. S. Legislative Bodies

Beginner’s Corner

Memorial to Famous Rosarian

September 1952

Club Officers

Club Calendar for September

President’s Message

For Any Mary

Editorially Speaking

A Touching Story Told by a Natchez Lady

Will of Miss Treeby V. Poole...1949

Natchez Garden Club Committees, 1952-53

Woman: The Eternal Question

Democratic, Of Course!

Famous Women

Picking the Posies

Old Wills

Epizootic

Why He Preferred Coffee

Calling All Men

“If You Had a Kindness Shown, Pass It On”

Variations in Ferns

The Olympic Spirit

A Southern Highlight

Rain

Siberian Iris

October 1952

Club Officers

Club Calendar for October

President’s Message

Editorially Speaking

Famous Women

Bamboo-An Increasingly Important Crop

How to Live to Be 100

New Approach to Planting Lily Bulbs

Picking and Curing the Gourds

Ask Me Another

Dried Arrangements

Old Wills

Bal Poudre

Iris

Old Recipes

Golden Rod

Watch on Night Migration

Poinsettias: Make the Most of Christmas Plants

Waterford Glass Coming Back After 100 Years

January 1953

Club Officers

Club Calendar for January

President's Message

Mississippi Bank Marker

Editorially Speaking

Tomorrows

Where the Old South Lives On

Famous American Women

Old Wills

Old Southern Recipes

In Defense of Col. Aaron Burr

Mississippi Offers Easy Escape from Snow and Ice

Camellia Hospitality Days in McComb, MS

Spring Fiesta Plans Revealed

Ms. America, Miss Dixie Coming

Society Prepares for GOD

Topics of the Time

An Indoor Orchard

Ask Me Another

May 1953

Club Officers

Club Calendar for May

President's Message

Trees

Time—Part of Eternity

Editorially Speaking

Do We Realize What We Have

Some Folklore on Native Plants

Mother's Day (Mothering Sunday)

Mrs. Reid Named by Garden Club

Old Wills

Mount Vernon Shrine Not Publicly Owned

The Real Evangeline

Home Gardening Big Business Census Shows

As Women See It

May

Applause and Advice
Famous Women
No Bargains
Growth of a Rose
Recipes
Soils
Shrub of Distinction
Perfectly Appropriate
A Monument to the Boll Weevil

April 1954

Club Officer
Club Calendar for April
President's Message
Garden Paths with a Purpose
Editorially Speaking
To Be Best Served... Serve Yourself
Were You Born in April
Memorial Day in Mississippi, April 26
A Group of Clematis without Temperament
How to Grow Good Roses
Fashion Fancies
Old Wills
Guide for Novice

Simplified Spraying

Speaking of Men

Recipes

Importance of Color

Discipline Dilemma

Coffee on the Side

Uncommon Words Heard Only in Louisiana

A Flower Clock

Speaking of Dogs

December 1954

Club Officers

Club Calendar for December

Editorially Speaking

Natchez in December 1897

Tavern Tellings

Gavel Raps

How Does Your Garden Grow

Old Wills

Christmas in Carolina

Peace for the World in the Heart of a Rose

Evergreens Take Spotlight

Mason-Dixon Map in Princeton Gift

Take a Tip from Texas

Ancient Culture Traced in Arctic

Window Box Popular

Guard Tree on Home Site

About the Bible

A Star for Christmas

The Real Meaning

Your Troubles Can Be Controlled

May 1955

Editorially Speaking

I Cried Myself to Sleep

My Child

Flashbacks

The Bird of Paradise

Tavern Tattlings

Natchez in May 1886

Old Wills

Gravel Gaps

Six Rules for Planting Set for New Gardeners

Why National Parks?

What Would You Wish?

Possibility of Cover

Upkeep in Summer

A Medieval Castle in Massachusetts

Progress in Chemical Soil Conditioners

Rose Favored As U. S. National Flower

September 1955

Natchez Garden Club Officers

Club Calendar for October

President's Message

Editorially Speaking

Great Comeback

Irwin Russell, Poet-Laureate of Negro Dialect

Old Wills

Gravel Raps

Restoration in St. Augustine Florida Continues

Natchez in September 1899

Quill Pens

The Natchez Indians

Bulb Planting Starts Now

Dogwood, Rewarding Tree If Well Tended

Foliar Feeders Offer Several Advantages

Close-Up: Insect Jekyll and Hyde

Cities Squabble over Tourist

KA-CHOO!

It's the Humiture that's to Blame

Southern Dialect Melodious

January 1956

Natchez Garden Club Officers

Club Calendar for February

Editorially Speaking

Tavern Tattlings

Tavern Treasure Hunt

Cat Roses in Right Falion

Dahlias Last if Properly Handled

Prune Shrubs for Blooms

Post Script

Pied Piper Has a Piker

Random Items from Old Natchez Newspaper

Preserving Nature for All

Bulbs Plan in February

Hobbyist Develop Better Varieties of Camellias

Amaryllis Blooms Indoors During Winter

Travel Back Roads for Pleasure

Pretzel King Says Monk First Made Pretzel

Scientist Say Worlds Weather Getting Colder

Largest Cave in the World Found

No One Asleep in Ocean Deep

History through a Lens

England Seeks Name for Folks Who Live in English Realm

Lichen Plant Most Likely to Succeed

March 1957

Natchez Garden Club Officers

Welcome Visitors

Natchez Under Five Flags

Our 1958 Pilgrimage Kings and Queens

Pilgrimagitis

Natchez Indians

The Confederate Pageant

Connelly's Tavern

Natchez of Yesteryear

Natchez Nostalgia

Impressions of America

Gardens of Old Natchez

APPENDIX D

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APPENDIX F

LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE NATCHEZ GARDEN CLUB

June,

After speaking with Cheryl Rinehart, President of The Natchez Garden club you have permission to use photographs from The Natchez Garden Club archive at Magnolia Hall in Natchez, Mississippi as well as copies of Over the Garden Wall housed at the Judge George W. Armstrong Library in Natchez, Mississippi. If you need anything else just let me know.

Sincerely,

Renee' Jennings, Executive Secretary

Natchez Garden Club

VITA

Rural Louisiana was the backdrop that fostered June Newman Graham's interest in history and literacy issues. Early schooling experience there exposed her to issues surrounding gender, literacy and schooling. She earned a degree in English in 2001 from Louisiana State University (LSU). June entered the master's degree program in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction where she worked under Nancy Nelson to better understand young readers' experiences with texts in a study entitled "Doing Reading: A Study to Investigate the Student Readers' Meaning-Making Process." After earning a Master of Arts in Education in 2002 she taught school for three years. She returned to LSU to enter the doctoral program in the Department of Theory, Policy and Practice. She began working with the Holmes program as a graduate assistant and began presenting papers at local and national education conferences. She is presently a member of the American Educational Research Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. She will graduate with a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the area of theory, policy and practice in August 2011. Her research interests include women's studies, literacy studies, Southern studies and curriculum history.